



इहानलपरेह

A Cultural Journal



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Front Cover :

Changing Trends in Carnatic music concert

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IN FOCUS

In Plato's words, "Music gives a soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination and life to everything". R. Sangeetha Tharanathan and Dr. R.N. Tharanathan trace the changes that have come about in the concert format of classical music, its content and style of presentation over the years.

Batting of an eyelid, beating of a heart, throbbing of the pulse ... the rhythm in all this is simple, natural and beautiful. But can rhythm become complex in music? Yes, says Mridanga Vidwan Mannarkoil J. Balaji in Complexities in rhythm – An empirical analysis with reference to Carnatic Music.

Ramani Jayaram Sharma offers her salutations to her illustrious Guru Smt. T.R. Balamani, a teacher par excellence who has groomed and guided many students.

Dr. Sakuntala Narasimhan takes us on a musical walk down memory lane with her interesting titbits in Musical Memories.

The therapeutic role of ragas in addressing the emotional needs of people is brought out by Dr. T.V. Sairam in his article.

Read what Garland N. Rajagopalan has to say about the poet-laureate and freedom-fighter Mahakavi Subramanya Bharathi whose vision embraced the entire universe.

Namita Devidayal pays a tribute to her Guru Dhondutai Kulkarni- a teacher who never compromised her musical integrity in pursuit of worldly success.

Smt. Jayalakshmi of the famous Radha-Jayalakshmi duo is no longer with us. P. Vasanth Kumar pays a tribute to this great singer.

Priya Viswanathan's emotional bonding with her veena is brought out in her poem, Veena- The Instrument.

As always, while the Quiz on Sangeeta & Natya keeps you guessing the right answers, Sabha Roundup and Happenings at the Vidyalaya cover some of the events of the quarter.

Classical Music – Then, Now, and Later

R. Sangeetha Tharanathan and Dr. R. N. Tharanathan

Classical music is strictly based on tradition (Sampradaya) following well- defined rules and regulations established and propounded by our music maestros. In its rendition there is no scope for permissible liberty for any deviation in presentation, dilution, or adulteration whatsoever. Adhering to certain basic principles set by our great musicians and musicologists is the essential pre-requisite for a classical music concert. These pre-requisites have been framed in such a way that a true followup of them results in enjoying great, divine music which is an ever lingering experience.

Classical music probably got its firm footing through the compositions of the great musical trinity Shri Thyagaraja, Shri Muthuswami Dikshitar and Shri Syama Sastry, who were indeed the true Vaggeyakaras. The compositional structure itself got changed by these Vaggeyakaras. Earlier, musical rendition was confined to a few restricted but common musical tunes having not many unusual intricacies or phrases or complicated movements (sancharas) in the form of sangatis or expansions. The rhythmic patterns were very simplified, probably just confined to a few specific simple talas. This is amply evident in the compositions of Shri Purandaradasa and other Haridasas, Shri Annamacharya, Shri Kshetragna and several others. The perfect kriti form of compositions came into existence with the musical compositions of the Trinity, which encompassed a vast gamut of musical forms such as madhyamakala and vilambakala kritis, group kritis such as ghana raga Pancharatna Kritis, group kritis on holy deities/holy places such as Panchalinga kritis of Dikshitar, Lalgudi / Kovur / Sriranga Pancharatna Kritis of Thyagaraja, Devi Kritis on Kamakshi and Meenakshi and Swarajatis by Syama Sastry, Ragamalika Kritis, etc. Shri Ootukkadu Venkata Subbaiyer (also called Venkataakavi) was another great Vaggeyakara , prior to the musical Trinity, who was an ardent devotee of Lord Krishna. He had composed a good number of excellent musical compositions in Sanskrit and Tamil, in the form of kritis. These compositions, specifically called Rasapadams, have a beautiful lyrical content set to very pleasing musical and rhythmic tunes. These compositions are very well-suited for dance performances.

A musical concert (Kutcheri) is generally of a fixed time duration, wherein the artist gets an opportunity to showcase his talent as well as his genius in chaste traditional style. Earlier, the concert used to take place without much time restriction, ranging from few hours to a few days it seems. It is said, for example, that on day one, an alapana (expansion) of a particular raga was rendered up to a certain sthayi (may be up to panchama or madhyama), followed by its continuation on day two, then on to the presentation of a kriti, embellishing it in all possible ways followed by niraval (expansion of a particular line in various musical patterns) singing with intricate kalpanaswaras. The latter used to encompass complicated rhythmic patterns. Such a concert rendition was much appreciated by all including the elite and lay audience. As there was no microphone system available at that time, the musician was supposed to perform at a higher pitch (sruthi) so as to make himself audible to one and all assembled in the hall. Contrary to this, over a period of time, the concert format has gradually but significantly changed and now it has come to a maximum duration of two plus hours in general. Earlier, the concert sometimes would mainly focus on complicated Ragam - Tanam - Pallavi singing set to intricate talas. These were sometimes thrown as a challenge to other Vidwans (musicians) or even to accompanists to repeat the same. This was especially done to display their vidwat (scholarship), amidst a big gathering of music connoisseurs including Zamindars, Devans and Kings (soliciting Royal patronage). In those days music concerts were usually held only on special occasions at home (marriages, upanayanam, house warming ceremony, or shashtiabdapoorti celebrations, etc.) or in temples (such as Sri Ramanavami or Gokulashtami or Sri Ganesha Chaturthi or Dussera music festivals, etc.) and as such people had no frequent opportunities to listen to a composer or a musician. Even the music training used to take place through Gurukula, wherein the student (s) had to remain in the teacher's house doing all sorts of household work and wait patiently for the mercy of

the Guru (teacher) to teach him. Thus, public patronage or institutional patronage, as at present, seldom existed. Similarly coverage by media (radio, television, electronic means) was absolutely nil, or minimal, if at all. Later came the gramophone recordings, then the cassette recording and CD recording facility. The concerts used to take place in temple premises or open pandals, hence entry to public was not restricted, unless it was a private or personal affair.

On the contrary, a paradigm shift has taken place now. The kutcheri pattern has now substantially changed and today what we hear is just a nutshell of the earlier music concerts, which is hardly of a duration of over 2 hours. Perhaps, it may be an exaggeration to say that a classical music concert of today is a replica of a concert that was in vogue a few decades ago. The so-called modern day classical music concert pattern was set to order by none other than the great vidwan Shri Ariyakkudi Ramanuja Iyengar in the 1930s. It was he who laid the foundation comprising a very well defined sequence of compositions consisting of a variety of kritis, namely to begin with a Varnam in single or preferably multiple speeds, an invocatory song on Lord Ganesha and/or Saraswathi followed by one or two madhyamakala kritis in moderate tempo with a little bit of niraval and kalpana swara singing, then a couple of sub-main ragas for brief expansion followed by a main raga for detailed elaboration, crowning with a vilambakala kriti and ornamenting with niraval / kalpanaswaras, and an extended tani avartanam. The latter usually provided an opportunity for the percussion artistes to exhibit their talents in full grandeur. This was followed by one or two brisk presentations of kritis and finally culminating in showcasing Ragam-Tanam-Pallavi (RTP) singing. This would provide the musician and accompanists a real challenge to fully exhibit their true musical capability and genuine classicism. RTP singing usually provided the musician with a tremendous scope for detailed elaboration in various rhythmic as well as raga patterns. Kalapramana variations (tempo or speed variations), also called viloma / anuloma singing and ragamalika (garland of ragas) swara singing were the main features of RTP singing. The post-RTP singing was usually confined to lighter compositions, namely Devaranamas (Haridasa's compositions), javali, padam, tillana, slokam in different ragas and ultimately concluding the concert by singing a mangalam (usually *Pavamana sutudubattu* in Sourashtra raga). In fact such a concert pattern normally gave enormous scope for one to present all his/her musical genius, which naturally made the concert a memorable and unforgettable experience. Such a concert pattern (usually of the duration of about 3.5 – 4 hours) thus set-forth by Shri Ariyakkudi got concurrence from the contemporary musicians all over, and became a guide-line to follow. Of course, for want of time, sometimes one would go in for some selective rendition, depending on the occasion, audience and the artiste's mood.

Today's music concert format has undergone a sea-change (not clear whether it is for good or bad!) both in its content and style of presentation. It is something for a true traditionalist to worry about. Many times even the way today's concert is planned looks astonishing, judging from the angle of 'True' tradition and chaste classicism. There seems to be no methodical planning of contrasting ragas, inclusion of ghana ragas and majestic vilambakala kritis of the musical Trinity. Instead, much (and unlimited) emphasis is given to rendition of minor ragas having limited scope for detailed elaboration, which is further marred by jet-speed presentation stuffed beyond measure with too many mathematical juggleries (gimmicks) in the form of kalpana swaras. As a result, the present day music concerts often lack aesthetic value or dimension. Instead they concentrate on mass popularity and self boosting. One can witness enough of adjustments and compromise in today's music concerts. Barring a few, the present day young and up-coming musicians need to ponder over these aspects seriously so as to preserve chaste classicism. Ghana ragas/rakti ragas need to be taken up for detailed expansion and for RTP. Minor ragas such as Revagupti, Vasanti, Karnaranjani, etc. are never suited for expansion, more so for RTP, and hence should be avoided for such renderings.

With such a trend getting wide appreciation in many quarters, it is rather difficult even to comprehend what is in store for our future generation. Until and unless senior musicians/critics/organizers/and audience, in particular discuss in tandem about our losing our purity and true classicism, and the possible remedial steps to overcome that, it may be difficult to set it right, and the future looks rather bleak!

Nowadays music appears to have a commercial viability. Youth participation in learning, performing and popularising Carnatic music has become increasingly apparent nowadays, which of course is a very satisfying development. Many young musicians of today, who are academically qualified and also well employed in high remunerative jobs are thinking of taking up music as their main profession. Though this is a reflection of their great commitment and dedication to music, it demands a careful watch by all, for their sustainability. In the opinion of the authors it looks highly adventurous, since barring a few lucky star singers, many other professional musicians have had a very tough time in meeting their family-routine demands/needs. One needs to carefully ponder over this aspect.

While appreciating such a trend/transformation by young up-coming musicians of today, it is vital that they pay special attention to the following points, viz.

1. A good teaching/training (pathantaram by a dedicated teacher (Guru) is most vital and fundamental. One should not imitate his Guru, instead he should strive to imbibe the best in him and try to adapt to his style of singing. Imitative music seldom pays dividends.
2. Regular but systematic practice with the knowledge of what, when and how to sing / present is essential. Analytical bent of mind while presenting is needed.
3. Building up of a vast repertoire is very much needed to avoid monotony in performance. This aspect or better desire on the part of the student helps him to be in touch with new, rare compositions of the Trinity as well as other composers.
4. One should have the urge / patience to listen to and understand the music performed by earlier stalwarts as well as today's contemporary musicians. This is referred to as "kelvigyanam".
5. Having a sweet voice and pleasing manners is highly beneficial, and contributes significantly to the success of a music concert.
6. Effective communication (PR driven music field!), disciplined way of existence on the stage and off the stage, and most importantly sincerity and devotion in rendering is very much essential. Unethical habits/practices should never be thought of / attempted.
7. Continuous practice with due attention to all intricacies such as sruti-laya and kalapramana and sahitya (lyrics) suddham, bhava (aesthetics), clear articulation – intonation – voice modulation, wherever necessary is a must for a successful musician.
8. Tradition (Sampradaya) should always be adhered to, be that a classical music concert or any other fine art or even in any walk of life. Breaking-up of tradition, by violating or deviating from the established norms put forth by our earlier maestros should never be ventured. In the name of rationalisation or innovation in planning the concert to cater to the needs of the masses or galleries, ignoring the traditional classicism or values would be detrimental or may be even suicidal on the part of a musician. Enough scope is there to innovate within the limits of tradition, come what may.
9. Voice culture is of paramount importance for any vocal musician. A well trained musician with a sweet voice can easily attract a large audience, both learned and common men. In Hindustani music much attention is given to voice culture (also called sruthisuddham).
10. Body distortions of any kind, should be strictly avoided or it would be better to keep it to the minimum.
11. Patience in learning and humility in conduct are integral parts of studying music. One should never aspire for quick/instant results/success. He should never venture upon shortcuts. Deserve first and then Desire! Perseverance in learning / practising is a must.
12. Learning directly (one to one) under a Guru is best. Currently many students have the habit of learning just by listening to cassettes, CDs, and DVDs, which may result in the lack of originality and individuality on the part of the student. This has to be avoided. Blind following is always dangerous.
13. While performing in a concert, one should never feel over-confident, instead should be modest to accompanists and others too. Arrogance of any kind is not at all good. Any concert, in particular, is teamwork. The accompanists while accompanying should complement the main artist. All of them should perform in tandem to make the concert a success.

Music Therapy

A good number of validated data, based on research findings, is available to show the effect of music on several human body ailments, including that of mind/brain. It is very well known that music has power to entertain, soothe, inspire, create and heal. Certain ragas played or sung in pristine purity, have the power of alleviating psychosomatic, psychological and also physiological ailments. For some, music is everything in life. Music therapy has come out as a novel means for curing several diseases, especially stress-related problems. It is established unambiguously that music therapy is one of the most effective tools for inducing stress relaxation. It has been shown that music helps to alleviate pain induced by stress/strain, it relieves anxiety, lowers anger and anguish, lowers blood pressure and enhances concentration and the power to relax. Several research investigations at various universities in India and abroad have brought out very interesting, data about the power of classical music. In a way music is a better stress management means than taking medicine. It is reported that even plants, leave alone animals, do positively respond to music, by showing a healthy, upward/bountiful growth/yield. It may be tempting to speculate a future prescription somewhat like this "Daily a 10 minute listening to Todi or Mohanam or Mukhari or Nilambari for 15 days, both in the morning and night before sleeping required for treatment of some particular disease."

Appreciation of Music

The two main streams of Indian music, namely Carnatic music (prevalent in South India) and Hindustani music (prevalent in North India) have evolved purely based on their style of presentation. In spite of many commonalities such as raga alapana, lyrical content, elaboration (specifically called niraval in Carnatic music) along with kalpanaswaras, the way each of them is handled makes these two musical forms sound so different, yet occasionally similar. Though both are melodic in content, the rhythmic intricacies are much more elaborate and varied in Carnatic music. Chaste classical music always stands apart, and in fact it forms the foundation of all other musical expressions, such as light music, film music, folk music and the modern fusion music. A good working knowledge of classical music indeed is essential for learning all other forms of music. Indian music, classical music in particular, is a God given gift. Of course, an individual is supposed to have 'Samskara' to attain perfection and excel in music. Even to appreciate chaste music calls for an understanding of a few fundamentals on the part of the listener. An insight into the theoretical aspects (called Lakshana Gyanam) of music and understanding the meaning of the composition, helps for a better presentation. With the advent of recent additions such as light classical music, which also includes singing of bhajans, tukkadās, a few lighter versions of Hindustani music, Jazz music, Pop music and of late Fusion music, one becomes perplexed about the sanctity and safety of chaste, traditional Carnatic music. In fact many of these recent additions give a scenario that is not very conducive to Carnatic music. Though it may look attractive and sound appealing, fusion music many a time makes a traditionalist to consider it as 'Con-Fusion' music!

Youth participation in learning and performing Carnatic music has become increasingly apparent now-a-days, which is definitely a satisfying development. With the proliferation of Sabhas/Organizations leading to umpteen opportunities to the youngsters for showcasing their musical talents, it is hoped that chaste classical music would remain ever alive.

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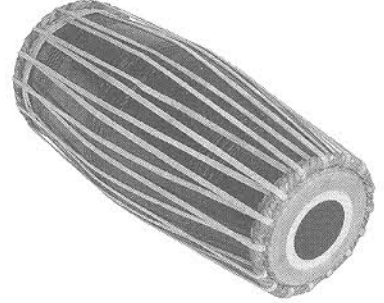
Complexities in Rhythm –An Empirical Analysis with Reference to Carnatic Music

Mridanga Vidwan Mannarkoil J Balaji

Introduction

தென்றல் வடிவும் சிவனார்
திருவடிவும்
மன்றல் வடிவும் மதன் வடிவும்
குன்றாத வேயினிசை வடிவும்
வேத வடிவும் காணில்
ஆய தாளம் காணலாம்.¹

(PanchaMarabu)



The above quote explains the complex nature of rhythm and hence the magnitude of the problems that a time cycle could pose with reference to Carnatic Music. The translation of the quote is: "If one can see the malayamarutham or the air, if one can see Lord Siva, if one can see the smell, if one can see the God of Love, Manmatha, if one can see the music emanating from the flute and if one can see the form of Veda, then one can certainly see all the talas."

Under this premise, an attempt is being made through this article to demystify the complexities one normally encounters in rhythm based exercises, *impromptu* performances and also during informal sessions either while teaching or practicing.

Time in Carnatic Music

While one has innumerable methods to calculate time, why is the term Tala used? The word "Tala" has roots both in Sanskrit and Tamil. In Sanskrit the word "tal" means palm of hand and in Tamil "tal" means foot with which dancers indicate time through constant beats. In Carnatic music tala is indicated by use of both palms coming together as a clap, wave and finger counts. Tala controls all musical activity and organises it into cognizable portions. Not only musical activity but all the activities in this world are rhythmically controlled through various means according to their inherent nature. In music also, the time is measured through this process and every Tala is cyclic in nature, as is the nature of Time. The cyclic nature of tala controls the rhythmic movement, adds appropriate check points with entry and exit nodes and also provides a firm base for creativity. So a proper redefinition would be: "Tala is a specific method of reckoning time for systematic musical or rhythmic movement".

Modes of reckoning time

Time measurement implies regulation and uniform recurrence. Rhythm in Carnatic Music is a highly sophisticated system which takes into account all the possible mathematical combinations. This element of rhythm is a by-product of an ancient element called "prastara" which means, the various sections of the Tala viz., anga-s, are permuted into different combinations in a highly systematic sequence in order to avoid repetition.² Varied forms of time measurements have been in vogue for centuries and all have emanated through different 'metres', called "chhanda-s", in vogue since the time of vedas.

¹Tamil-Isai an Introduction – Prof. Dr. M. A Bhageerathy,
<http://tamizisai.weebly.com/introduction-to-tamil-music.html>

²Permutative Genius in Tala (Prastara) in Indian Music-Akella Mallikarjuna Sharma

Time as such is unlimited and beyond all restrictions. In order to regulate time there should be an action with a specific length, and the total of such successive actions will give us the length per cycle of a Tala. This action is called "kriya" which are of two types "sashabdha" (sounded action) and "nishabdha" (silent action). All these indicate only the location in a particular rhythm cycle that serve as a reference index for positional perception.

We already know that the Tala is cyclic in nature and in Carnatic Music one such cycle is called an "Avarta". Each avarta has different time dividing points indicated through sections which are called "anga-s", consisting of both sashabdha and nishabdhakriya-s. There are different types of anga-s like laghu, drutam, anudrutam, guru, plutam and kakapadam, to give clues to calculate the covered distance and the distance left in a particular rhythm cycle. "Anga-s" can be construed merely as a systematic time-dividers.

The anga-s, which are gesture driven and expressed through beats, waves etc., have a certain duration between each of them and one such duration in Tala is called an "akshara". It is a Sanskrit word meaning "a syllable". So an akshara is nothing but syllable measurement unit per beat, maintained uniformly through the anga-s for a particular speed, per cycle or for a series of cycles. The measurement of time in various Tala cycles is achieved through akshara count. The concept of 3 kala-s or speeds is introduced to any student of music to impress upon the use of such syllables to understand the length of a Tala and its movement through its constituents. The 3 speeds are nothing but doubling of syllables in a beat. In first speed there is 1 akshara per beat; in second speed there are 2 aksharas per beat; in third speed there are 4 aksharas per beat and so on. I just restricted with 3 speeds but ideally a student is taught to render "shad-kala" meaning 6 speeds in which aksharas are doubled to match the length of a beat and to fill a Tala cycle. In this process it is imperative that the duration of two successive beats is kept constant and stable.

Complexities encountered while rendering speeds

Learning the concept of three speeds alone doesn't give the student a firm grip over the Tala as there is often a case of drifting away from the time duration on two successive beats or for a total cycle. This happens very often when there is a mixture of speeds: either while taking 1st speed and moving on to third speed or vice versa. Rendering a faster phrase and coming back to slower phrase also tends to dislocate the time cycle. These are basic complexities that a student could encounter while starting his lessons in rhythm. While the learning methods are sufficient and fool-proof, yet this problem is a perennial one like the eternal time itself.

Complexities encountered in korvais

A "korvai" is a structured rhythmic composition set to a metre. A rhythmic composition could be composed by a practitioner himself according to the set guidelines or learnt through already existing rhythmic composition composed by others. As such a korvai has two parts viz., purvanga and uttharanga. Purvanga is the first portion of the korvai which introduces a rhythmic idea and uttharanga is the ending portion which finishes the rhythmic idea. Both purvanga and uttharanga are normally made of 3 parts which may be equal or increasing or decreasing. There are some korvais in which purvanga has more than three parts but these are exceptions. A korvai gets complicated in the sense that there are 6 parts in a korvai irrespective of the Tala while most of the Talas are moving in multiples of 2 or 4. The purvanga is generally divisible by 3 whereas the uttharanga, despite having 3 portions, may or may not be divisible by three as it is generally the remainder to fill up the gap left by purvanga. Unless the korvai is an already established one, the difficulty of filling up the gaps in uttharanga remains a challenge for students and musicians alike. The *impromptu* filling up of the gaps can be achieved only through rigorous practice and constant rhythmic awareness of relational distances in a Tala cycle or for a series of such cycles. In order to know how much distance one has covered in a Tala or how much distance is left to reach the nodal point one has to be aware of the various points in a Tala and internalise their positions and distances.

Complexities encountered in forming mohara

Moharas are rhythmic cadences, having a set rule and a rigid pattern. It has to be done normally for 4 avarta-s and the mukthayi (ending portion) of an entire mohara should be double of the 4th portion as explained here. A mohara has got 4 portions within an avarta and the 4th portion is a 2 count short mukthayi.³ If the short mukthayi is for 2 counts then the ending mukthayi for a mohara has to be 4 counts and accordingly second portion of the mohara will also be for 2 counts, if it is 3 then the ending mukthayi will be for 6 counts and accordingly the second portion of the mohara will have 3 as its count. In mohara the patterns are always played in 3rd speed or higher.

During the four avarta rendition it follows a pattern as explained below:

Let A, B, C and D as 4 portions in a Mohara. An example of a mohara for 9 counts Tala will be as follows: (Eg:-Khandajatitriputa Tala-rendered in madhyamakala)

A will have 5; B will have 4; C will have 5; and D will have 4 (which will be D1 and D2 having 2 counts each of which D1 is filled up and D2 will be 1 + 1(gap)) making a total to 18 which will be the total count in madhyamakala for a 9 count Tala.

The structure of mohara

1 st Avarta	A	B	C	D//
2 nd Avarta	A	B	C	D//
3 rd Avarta	A	B	C	D2 and pattern of A will be rendered and continued in 4 th Avarta.
4 th Avarta	Continuation of A and D2; then A once which will be followed by D1 played three times with 2 Gaps each for the first and second time only. (D1 +2 gaps; D1 + 2 gaps; D1 is the structure of 4 aksharamuktaye).			

It can be noticed that the patterns A and C are same patterns and in most of the Talas it will be like this. In exceptional cases the patterns for A and C will be different where the Tala demands unequal splitting of these portions. It can also be noticed from the above that the 2nd avarta is just the repetition of the first avarta.

Illustration

9 Count Mohara

A = kitathakatha .thamkitathakatharikitathaka = 5

B = dhi .thaamkitathakatharikitathaka = 4

C = kitathakatha .thamkitathakatharikitathaka = 5

D1 = thakadhinathakadhina = 2

D2 = Thakadhinatham . = 2

³ Mukthayi is are distinctive ending portions generally played for 4 counts or higher. So in order to indicate a completion of a cycle in a mohara a short Mukthayi is played for 2 counts.

1 st Beat	(A) Kita thaka tha .	Kita thakaTha .	Kita thakaTha .	(A Continued) Thamkitathakathari
2 nd Beat	Thamkitathakathari	Thamkitathakathari	Thamkitathakathari	Kita thaka(D2) Thakajonu
3 rd Beat	Kita thaka/ (B) dhi.	Kita thaka/ dhi.	Kita thaka/ dhi.	Thom . (A) kitathaka
4 th Beat	Thamkitathakathari	Thamkitathakathari	Thamkitathakathari	Tha .thamkita
5 th Beat	Kita thaka/ (C) kitaThaka	Kita thaka/ Kita thaka	Kita thaka/ Kita thaka	Thakatharikitathaka
6 th Beat	Tha .thamkita	Tha .thamkita	Tha .thamkita	(D1) Thakajonu Thakajonu
7 th Beat	Thakatharikitathaka	Thakatharikitathaka	Thakatharikitathaka	Thom .(D1) Thakajonu
8 th Beat	(D1) Thakajonuthakajonu	Thakajonuthakajonu	(D2) Thakajonu thom .	Thakajonu thom .
9 th Beat	(D2) Thakajonu thom .	Thakajonu thom .	(A) Kita thakatha	(D1) Thakajonuthakajonu (thom)

The above is the general rule which is applicable for most of the talas in vogue like Chatusra Tripata Tala, Khanda Tripata Tala, Misra Chapu Tala, Khanda Chapu Tala, Tisra Eka Tala, Misra Jhampa Tala, Ata Tala. The list is not exhaustive but a mention has been made for those Talas in which more than 90% of the compositions have been composed. If the above rules are followed then moharas become easy to compose and execute.

Complexities encountered during Kriti accompaniment

By far the most tricky and hard-to-please part of rhythmic exercise in Carnatic music is accompaniment to different types of compositions rendered by various artistes. The problems encountered are not mere mathematical or logical, but of indefinable and non-quantifiable subjective ones concerning aesthetic perception of the individual. Entire Carnatic Music thrives on compositional richness composed by a plethora of composers. Mathematical calculations can be memorised and executed through rigorous training and practice, whereas accompaniment to a Kriti cannot be memorised. It has to be achieved through a special process called "Kriti Gnana" literally meaning "knowledge of kriti".

The problems with regard to the above are listed here:

- 1) Accompaniment for a same kriti rendered in different speeds by different artistes;
- 2) Accompaniment to hitherto unheard of kritis ;
- 3) Accompaniment to vilamba (slow speed) kalakritis ;
- 4) Filling up gaps with arudis, mukthayis and short catchy phrases ;
- 5) Giving appropriate pauses (The selection of the place for giving a pause is the most difficult in this process) ;
- 6) Accompaniment to instruments with special reference to vina accompaniment ;
- 7) Accompaniment to Ragam, Tanam, Pallavi and other compositions like Thillanas, Tiruppugazhs etc.

Along with the above the vocalist's mood, tone and tenor complicate the entire creative process especially rhythmic accompaniment. Apart from this the competence level of the upapakkavadhya, like ghatam, khanjira, morsing etc., also enhances the rhythmic accompaniment and creativity during solo versions.

Complexities encountered in Gati

Gati is of 5 types which are Thisra, Chatusra, Khanda, Misra and Sankirna having 3, 4, 5, 7 and 9 as their mathematical representatives. It is a simple process by which 4 is made into 3 or 5 or 7 or 9. This is Gati change or Gati Bhedam as is being popularly called. Dr. Trichy Sankaran opines Gati Bhedam as an integral part of rhythmic improvisation and names it "metric modulation".⁴ Gati Bhedam can be done for any Tala and while doing gati bhedam the main problem is maintaining the tempo and still rendering the rhythmic patterns. As percussion artistes depend on the Tala shown by others, the rhythmic control should emanate from within rather than from outside. This is easier said than done as different individuals have different perception of time and its variations. Through preponderance, thisra has now become an easy gati bheda in concerts whereas Khanda, misra and sankirna are not often heard.

While talking about gati another aspect could be mentioned as a sequel. A concept called "chaturathisram" has been in vogue for many years but has gained recognition and popularity in the recent time. This was made popular in the mainstream through renditions of Ragam, Tanam Pallavi in Chatusra Thisram. The concept is very simple: while 4 becomes 3 in Gati Bhedam, 3 becomes 4 in "chaturathisram". In other words all madhyamakala 2 aksharas become 3 aksharas, 4 aksharas become 6 aksharas and so on and so forth.

For rendering chaturathisram, the metre will be going in 4s only whereas the 3s will be made as 4 and for every 3 beats the rhythmic patterns reach different nodes. In a gati variation 4 becomes 3 in tisragatibhedam where each beat could be a nodal point but in chaturathisram every 3rd beat is only the nodal point.⁵

Having briefly explained most of the complexities found in handling rhythm in Carnatic Music, an indicative reference for overcoming the above complexities to conduct the concert in a smooth manner, is provided below: -

- 1) Have one speed in mind while remembering the counts for a particular tala. For eg., if one remembers Chatusra Tripata Tala as having 8 Aksharas, then remember Rupaka Tala as 3 aksharas, Misra Chapu as $3\frac{1}{2}$ aksharas and Khanda Chapu as $2\frac{1}{2}$ aksharas. There is a reason for referring to these Talas in fractions, which is explained here. If Chaturatriputa has 8 aksharas it is presumed that one beat is having 1 syllable in first speed, 2 syllables in 2nd speed and 4 syllables in 3rd speed. Following the reference of 4 syllables per beat if Misra Chaputala is taken it has 6 syllables in the first portion and 8 syllables in the 2nd portion. 6 syllables is $4 + 2$ which is $1\frac{1}{2}$; 8 syllables is $4 + 4$ which is 2 and hence $1\frac{1}{2} + 2$ is $3\frac{1}{2}$. Whenever any pattern is rendered for any Tala it is better to keep the total aksharas in mind in a convenient kala and maintain the same reference for all the Talas. Keeping different akshara references for different talas will only create more confusion.
- 2) Rhythmic composition in Carnatic Music is all about mixture of speeds and rendering the patterns in quick succession. This component of our system tends to dislocate the metronomic feature of Tala and the practitioner either tends to speed up or slow down the metre, thereby defeating the very purpose of Tala, that of regulating time. In order to circumvent this problem whenever there is a change of event in a Tala, a conscious effort to bring it back to the original time duration will help a long way in tempo-maintenance.

⁴ *The Journal of Music Academy Vol. LVII-Page 105-Rhythmic Improvisation in Music-Trichy Sankaran.*

⁵ *A nodal point in a tala is any point where the rhythmic pattern takes the next cycle. It need not be starting point of a tala or the half-point of a tala. It can be anywhere in the tala and all the beats are nodal points. For example in chaturajaatitripatatala the ring finger is the 3rd nodal point and so on.*

- 3) In this connection, it would be relevant to mention here an observation made by Sangita Kalanidhi Dr. Umayalpuram K Sivaraman that a "Taniavartanam is only Extension of the song"⁶ and not a separate portion in a concert warrants a deeper understanding that, whenever an artiste tend to speed up the rhythm he should recollect mentally the kalapramanam with which the kriti started, which will ultimately help in maintaining a steady rhythm throughout the kriti and also during solo versions.
- 4) Practising with a metronome will help recognise and internalise the duration of a beat and the relative speed of the pattern. Practising with different speeds in metronome at random will help improve Talastabilisation. This also improves the speed ability while performing 3rd or 4th speeds. Alternating between 1st speed and 4th speed and returning to 1st speed will also help Talastabilisation internally. This will ultimately help on stage performance and gain control over the rhythm if anyone tends to go astray. By this I don't intend to make the rhythm artiste a manual metronome but help counter the problems of Talastabilisation, whether self-caused or caused by others and maintenance of tempo.
- 5) Practising various speeds in succession by increasing the metronome speed and also trying to keep the 2nd speed as the 1st speed and 3rd speed as 2nd speed and 4th speed as 3rd speed and coming back to the original 1st speed will certainly improve the time awareness.
- 6) Vocalising the rhythmic syllables and uttering them to one's own beat before rendering them on their respective instruments will go a long way in internalising the accent points.
- 7) Practising with a vocal artiste will help to a greater extent while accompanying for a kriti and different types of kritis. Different types of kritis will be rendered in different speeds and one gains mastery over a period of time by accompanying for varying speeds and also for different artistes.
- 8) Memorising the rhythmic calculations along with their representative rhythmic syllables is a must for a rhythm artiste in Carnatic music. Constant practice is a must and repetitive practice of the same rhythmic pattern will help in the long run in perfecting the syllables or phrases. This will help better anticipation skills and *impromptu* improvisations.
- 9) While practising Gati for a particular Tala for example Adi Tala, it is better to practice the basic lessons taught in the particular Tala representing the Gati. For example playing the lessons learnt in Rupaka Tala as Thisra Nadai in Adi Tala or playing the lessons learnt in Khanda Chapu Tala as Khandanadai in Aditala will help one to internalise the relational time variations between Chatusram and Thisram or Chatusram and Khandam or Chatusram and Misram etc.
- 10) Exploration and extension of the Gati for other Talas along the above lines is also desirable. For example extending the Rupaka Tala lessons in Misra Jhampa Tala will help a student find out the mathematical and rhythmic differences between the Talas. This will also make the student understand the inter-rhythmic connections.

Conclusion

Rhythm is simple in a human being whereas complicated in music. We don't feel the heartbeat in our daily activity since it is there as a simple muscle movement. Rhythm in music transcends all limitations, boundaries and vistas. It is unfathomable and unconquerable. The aim is to learn the art with utmost sincerity, practice with utmost devotion and spread it with utmost dedication.

⁶Presidential Address by Sri Umayalpuram K Sivaraman in "The Journal of the Music Academy" Vol.LXXV-2002, Page 12.

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Mannarkoil J Balaji is a performing musician having concert experience of 30 years known for his technical and aesthetic brilliance.

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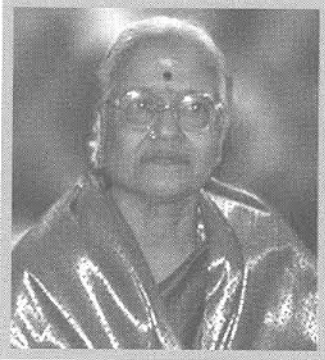
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Guru Vandanam – Smt. T. R. Balamani Salutations to a Great Carnatic Music Guru

Ramani Jayaram Sharma



Smt. T.R. Balamani

Mumbai's great Carnatic Guru, T. R. Balamani was felicitated at Kasturi Srinivasan Hall, Music Academy on 17th May 2014 and it was such a joyous celebration for all her students. Shri N.Murali (President, Music Academy) presided over the felicitation which was attended by so many artists of Chennai. Frail though she appears now, Mami was beaming with joy surrounded by students; her family beaming with pride at the recognition. She had got the appreciation due and it was a collective felicitation by her students from all over the world.

Bombay Jayashri Ramnath, Shankar Mahadevan, N. Ramani and Lalgudi G.J. R. Krishnan were some of the famous personalities that I could recognise although there were many more. The words spoken by both the Sangita Kalanidhis - Shri T.K. Murthy, Smt.Vedavalli and Mr. Ramnarayan (Editor-in-Chief, Shruti) were endearing, apt and said a lot about Mami's contribution to teaching Carnatic music in the traditional way. 'Mumbai's loss is Chennai's gain' was an oft repeated phrase that day, now that Mami has moved to Chennai to stay with Ranjani, her daughter and student as well. Everyone spoke of Mami as a great and illustrious guru who had groomed so many students, many of whom have become great singers.

Prasanna Venkatraman performed for the occasion and he has probably been a student in the true sense, starting his musical journey very young. The audio visual presentation on Mami was so beautifully put together with slides collected painstakingly from students all over the world. Many wrote about her on the Facebook page and posted pictures, sharing their experiences with the Guru. The culmination of the program was *Mamava Pattabhirama* in Manirangu ragam by all her students, the audio clip being shared with all students so that they could practise and sing along. It was indeed a beautiful moment and a befitting tribute to our dear Guru who taught us so much. It ended with so many students felicitating her personally with flowers and happily clicking pictures.

My Journey with Balamani Mami

My introduction to Balamani Mami was in 1997 along my journey as a student of Carnatic music. I had heard about her from one of my earlier music teachers; she was Mami's student. I have learnt music all my life and absorbed all the styles that I could, my taste restricted to aesthetic and harmonious music. I suppose this is what led me to become a big fan of Bombay Jayashri Ramnath who was a student of Balamani Mami. Mami later on named her as my "Manasika Guru" as I kept raving about her style of singing.

Music was forced on me by my mother, my 'ideal and critic', who inspired me to learn and practise the art as she saw the gift in me very early. She would say "Creativity is God's gift, don't waste your talent" (be it music, painting, embroidery or craft). Music stayed with me through all the highs and lows of my life. As a kid I hated music class; it took me away from playing with friends, but now I realise how important it has been in moulding me as a good human being with good value systems. I have had so many gurus from childhood but the most impressionable and most dedicated of them has been Balamani Mami.

It was Dr. Balu Shekar from whom also I had learnt who not only encouraged me but also insisted that I go to Balamani Mami. He had heard her students like Raji Gopalakrishnan, perform every year when he took his vacation for the December Season.

During a discussion with a friend about how I was going to meet Mami, and would need to choose if I wanted to learn in a group, he at once said "Balamani Mami! Forget deciding and choosing, she needs to accept you as her student."

With a lot of apprehension in January 2000, I went to Mami's house. The memory is vivid and still fresh in my mind; Mami was sitting on her diwan – Mama sitting in the hall and watching TV. Mami asked me how I got to know about her and then asked me to sing a varnam, which I did, although I had practised kirtanams. She said "How many varnams do you know?" When I told her I knew "20 or so" she was happy, because she said "Students just learn 6-8 varnams and want to be performers. I am glad your teacher taught you so many." From then on there was no looking back. I told Mami, "I will learn as long as you teach me." Notations, varnams, theory, etc. interested me no end. She ensured we learnt kritis of so many well-known and unknown composers; often exposing us to different styles of singing by her contemporaries and seniors. It was a huge learning. I tried my hand at the veena which gave me insights into different swaras and also at keyboard to be able to get my aarohanams and avarohanams correct. She introduced us to Hindustani music as well and bhajans in melodious ragas. Sahitya was an integral part of lessons and she ensured we corrected pronunciations of lyrics.

Often while teaching she would say "We need a century in varnams" and truly we learnt close to 100 of them; I learnt to love varnams because of the way she taught it. We would learn the varnam and follow it up with a kriti in that ragam so that it was imbibed better. My duty in each class was to get the notations enlarged for Mami so that she could view them easily. Mami was endearing along with her discipline, mentoring, the regimental singing sessions and the best part was the different ways in which she would sing a line and have us looking at her in awe. She would make us sing it till we got it right. Early on, we had periodic tests; she believed that we had to learn the swarams and sahityam by-heart that so that we could focus on the beauty of the swarams and the nuances that we could add. Aesthetics was always her main focus in whatever she taught.

We miss you Mami, but you need to be with family now and hope you will get to spread the light of knowledge to many many more students like us....

Ramani Jayaram Sharma is a student of Smt. T.R. Balamani residing in Mumbai.

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Musical Memories - 1

Dr. Sakuntala Narasimhan

A chilly Sunday morning in Connaught Place, Delhi, during the mid-fifties. With a huge shamiana and a milling crowd of South Indian music lovers, it was like a wedding celebration, especially as the thavil artiste began to warm up with a few strokes, and the oththu tuned up. On the stage sat a very rotund, dark complexioned vidwan who, my mother told me in hushed tones of awe, was a "legend" in the music world. To me, a diminutive school girl, who had never heard nadaswaram live, it was an occasion to remember, as the concert began. The famous poet Harindranath Chattopadhyay was in the audience. I can still recall every phrase of the enchanting Todi alapana that transported even a child like me, to wonderland with phrases of improvisation that left us all breathless with admiration. I have never heard a Todi to match it, in the 50-odd years since then.



◀ Shri. T.N. Rajarathinam Pillai

It was Rajarathinam Pillai, playing to a Delhi audience at an impromptu recital, at the request of connoisseurs (I do not remember what had brought him to Delhi). Think of all the adjectives associated with music, and you would still not do justice to the artiste – mesmerizing, heavenly, sparkling, soul filling, even awe inspiring with some of his characteristic upward sweeps in superfast speed that I heard only GNB reproduce when I heard him some years later.

Harindranath Chattopadhyay suddenly and impulsively sprang to his feet and began to address the gathering that had filled the entire pavement outside the venue. "Look at him, look at him, sitting like a lion carved out of stone and producing such incredible music," he gushed. "Look at how he fills his cheeks with his breath and lets it out through this divine reed to give us such elevating music," he went on, carried away by his own eloquence the way only poets can. Every word was true. Looking back I now realize I was blessed to be a witness to that morning performance by that legendary vidwan. That was perhaps my subconscious initiation to a nadaswaram style of alapana which I later became partial to – spinning out permutations and variations, especially in the upper tetra chord, in akara. Years later, the same Rajaratnam Pillai visited the music college where Sangita Kalanidhi T.N.Swaminatha Pillai was taking a class for us. Without any fuss or ado, Rajaratnam Pillai squatted down along with us (he was portly, as was Swaminatha Pillai, who often had trouble squatting cross-legged) and began to listen quietly. We were doing a pallavi that morning. And of course we students were all nervous, singing in front of him. Very casually he said to our teacher, when we were done, that he could "not do such complicated pallavis", with calculations. What humility! One of the greatest artistes of the century, a legend in his own lifetime, and he put on no airs, no 'nakhras'. If he had visited the college because he wanted to have a word with Swaminatha Pillai, he could have interrupted the class, but he did not. That was true greatness. Have we lost that caliber of greatness that could also be humble, or is it that in today's pushy world, one needs to be a go-getter to get anywhere, and the humble only get left behind in the rat race?



◀ Smt. D.K. Pattammal

D.K. Pattammal came to perform at the NCPA at Mumbai some 45 years ago, and Padma Swaminathan (daughter of the legendary stage personality F.G. Natesa Iyer) who was in Mumbai and knew Pattammal well, took me backstage to talk to the artiste. Just before going on stage to begin her concert, DKP raised her joined hands together and sent up a fervent prayer to God to ensure that the kutcheri went off well (*kadavuley, ellaam nallapadia aaganam*)- a leading singer with an established

reputation as one of the top vocalists of the South; and again, such humility, seeking divine blessings, with complete lack of arrogance. I don't know if today's performers seek God's help but certainly it is more fashionable to focus more on the intervention of the sound engineers and hall staff to ensure that the mike is working properly (or demanding that it be adjusted, to lower the violin or mridangam, the tambura etc)

My mother took me to meet another legendary musician, Ustad Amir Khan during the late 50s when he came to perform at Visakhapatnam (where my father was then posted on deputation). She asked the ustad to teach me the Abhogi tarana that he had sung the previous evening at his concert. It was perhaps audacious to ask him to teach a young girl but he obliged readily, even though he did not know us, much less about our musical ability to learn. His voice gave trouble and he was apologetic—a man whose voice etched his name in letters of gold in the annals of 20th century Hindustani music! That again, was an eye opener, especially at an impressionable age.



Shri. T.R.Mahalingam

A peek of another kind into the personality of a musician was provided when we were students at the music college in Chennai and asked flute T.R.Mahalingam to give a concert at the college in our monthly series. He agreed but one of his disciples told us in confidence, later, that he was planning to play hooky. Impossible, we students argued, he has promised to play and he will turn up. Mali was a huge crowd puller, and we were expecting a full hall. An hour before the scheduled time, Mali sent word through a disciple that he was unable to come (we learned later that he had taken some of his buddies and pushed off to play a cricket match). We hastily put up a board at the entrance saying that the scheduled artiste was being replaced by a Veena concert. We watched horrified as car after car came to the portico, and turned back to leave as soon as the board was read. Balasaraswati came; we tried to persuade her to come in and attend the substitute concert, but she made some excuse and went away. In the end we had just a small audience even though the substitute player was also a seasoned and leading performer.

At another time this same Mali wrapped a turban round his head to hide his identity, took a few disciples along and sat incognito, in the audience that was waiting for him to play. When he heard some of the people in the audience make uncomplimentary remarks about this "eccentric flutist" who keeps his listeners waiting for hours, he joined them and added, "Yes, yes, he has no manners" till his cronies were ready to roll with laughter. No one recognized him, and after waiting for an hour the audience melted away, cursing him roundly. He too left, after enjoying the whole thing like a drama. And still people came to listen to him, despite his disregard for them, because his playing was so divine, so transporting, that it was worth taking the chance that he may disappoint them by not turning up. He got away with it.

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◀ *Ustad Hafeez Ahmed Khan*

Yet another memory is of being taken by my guru Ustad Hafeez Ahmed Khan sahib, to meet his guru, Ustad Nissar Hussain Khan sahib ("Tarana Samrat") at the ITC Sangeet Research Academy campus where he was resident guru, when I visited Kolkata in 1985 to perform at the annual Tansen music festival.

As Nissar Hussain Khan sahib entered the room where I was waiting, I rose, joined my hands in



◀ *Ustad Nissar Hussain Khan*

namaskar, and said to him, "Aap se milkar badi khushee huyee" (I am honoured to meet you). He glared at me, and thereafter ignored me while he chatted with my guru. Apparently, it was disrespectful for a junior to address a senior unless the latter spoke first (this etiquette is also reportedly followed while addressing the queen in England). I had violated this unwritten rule by addressing him first, before he took note of my presence and spoke to me. The ustad was a stickler for etiquette, and was considered "royalty", no less, among the musical fraternity of those days. My guru was already a leading ustad and deputy chief producer at AIR Delhi, with disciples of his own, but in the presence of his guru, I noticed, he remained standing till he was permitted and asked to sit down.

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Musical Memories - 2

Dr. Sakuntala Narasimhan

As I write, independence day has just been celebrated, and my thoughts go to the first independence day, 15 August 1947, when I was a kid in Delhi. There was wild rioting all around, with hordes of refugees streaming into the city and others running away to Pakistan, but to me as a child most of it made no sense. I do however, remember one conversation of that time, related to music.



Ustad Ahmed Raza Khan Saheb

My mother was learning Hindustani music from a Muslim ustad, the late Ahmed Raza Khan. He played the vichitraveena (fretless, like the South Indian Gottuvadyam) The practitioners of this instrument can be counted on the fingers of one hand, even today. He would come riding a bicycle (like most musicians of that day – even Ravi Shankar came to Broadcasting House on a cycle, and my teacher for Carnatic music, Pudukode K. Krishnamurthy, likewise, used a bicycle.)

One day, during the rioting and targeting of Muslims, my mother asked her ustad whether it was safe for him to come to give lessons, given the pervasive communal clashes. He said he “did not know” but that he had nothing else to turn to, apart from music to make a living, as he was illiterate like most musicians of that time. (He was on the staff of All India Radio, Delhi and a member of the National Vadya Vrinda Orchestra conducted by Ravi Shankar and the late T.K. Jayarama Iyer.) “If these disturbances continue,” he said, “maybe I will run away to some safer place and sell fruit to earn money—*faroot bechoonga*.” I clearly remember that phrase to this day, fruit pronounced as “faroot” in the typical North Indian way. There were no supermarkets at that time, fruit and vegetables were hawked from door to door, in baskets, and housewives haggled hard, to bring the price down for each item.

In retrospect, it was a very pathetic statement. A seasoned ustad, with an enviable repertoire, and one proficient in a rare instrument at that, and trained by a stalwart ustad, contemplating fruit selling door to door, to keep his family fed ! I have since then read the biographies of several musicians of yore who grew up in poverty, (one woman dhrupad singer of the pre-independence era, rolled bidis for a living, others cleaned houses as servants) but this was my personal encounter with a musician caught in the crossfire of communal riots and a traumatic partitioning of the country. As it turned out, happily, he did not have to turn to fruit selling, he continued with AIR till retirement.

I used to be running around the house, playing while he taught my mother, and one day he said to me, to entice me to stop running around, “Bachchi, if you sing this bandish, I will give you two annas.” I wanted those two annas, because my mother would not let me buy ice cream (which cost two annas – all my school friends bought it from the cart at lunch time, but my mother said cold items were bad for the voice). He sang the sthayi (opening line) of a drutkhayal in raga Adana (*kaptaan kaha gayo jagatmey fateli*), and I reproduced it. He handed over the two anna coin, and I took it with glee. After he left, my mother slapped me for accepting money from an indigent ustad. I still remember that song, 65 years later!

Another memory is of a recital at Srinivasa Sastri hall in Chennai, during the mid 50s, when AIR organized a “Children’s kutcheri” (*Kuzandaigal kutcheri*) with an invited audience. D.K.Pattammal’s son Sivakumar (father of Nityasree) played mridangam and

M.Chandrasekharan was on the violin for my vocal recital (we were all teenagers) At the end of the programme, when I returned to my hostel, the principal, MusiriSubramanya Iyer, was sitting near the entrance, waiting for someone. With the brashness of immaturity, I asked him, "Sir, did you listen to my recital?" It was a cheeky thing to ask. He merely looked at me and remained silent. I have seen T.K.Govinda Rao (during the mid-50s) stand deferentially before his guru (Musiri) and answer him only with his mouth covered by his hand (*vaayipoth-thi*). Such was the deference commanded by the legendary teachers of the old guard. Likewise, Seergazhi Govindarajan, who was a disciple of T.N.SwaminathaPillai, used to be scared to tell his teacher that he wanted to learn and sing a particular kriti for his next broadcast; he had to wait till the guru asked him what he was planning to sing, and very hesitantly Govindarajan would say, he wanted to learn *O Rangasayee* (or whatever he had in mind). If the guru was willing to teach that song, he would, otherwise, it was just not done to ask that it be taught, even if Govindarajan was already a known broadcaster and performer on the kutcheri platform. Does that kind of deference and etiquette, exist today?

One other memory is of a learning session with my guru in the Hindustani system, Ustad Hafeez Ahmed Khan sahib. After teaching me a khayalbandish, he asked me to do improvisations, and took turns with me, to widen my understanding. In one particular sortie, I sang a phrase that went up to the taarashadja. He let a few tala cycles go silently before he resumed the improvisations. I knew intuitively that something was wrong, but had no idea what I had done to annoy him. At the end of the day's session, as he was leaving, he said, "Beti, there are some things one should know and observe as a disciple." Apparently, guru-shishya etiquette required that if the guru restricts his improvisations to notes below the top shadja, the disciple has no business exceeding the limit. Only after the guru touches taarashadja, can the students take that liberty. Going beyond the notes that the guru spanned, amounts to saying that one is better than the guru. Not done. That was a lesson I will never forget. It is also good practice and training, to restrict one's sorties and it widens one's imagination. I do this sometimes with my students, restricting the notes that they can employ, during kalpanaswaram singing, for example.

Respect for one's guru is the base on which respect for the art one is being taught, grows. Sadly, this aspect is today lost. Anyone can make money, or acquire property but it is the guru who enriches us with something that is priceless and invaluable -- knowledge. Even esoteric books -- or CDs and skype - cannot be a substitute for a teacher.

Dr. Sakuntala Narasimhan is a Bangalore-based journalist, author, musician and consumer rights activist.

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The Raga Music for the Emotionally Disturbed

Dr. T. V. Sairam

The ancient raga system of India is well-known for centuries for its emotional content and impact. The ragas have been selectively used along with appropriate rhythms and beats to address the turbulent minds and to balance the emotional upheavals during unbearable losses and trauma experienced by our forefathers. 'Raga Chikitsa' was one of the ancient texts which had dealt with the therapeutic role of ragas.

Recent years have witnessed the revival of research on Indian ragas for their therapeutic role. We all know that Indian ragas can effectively address the emotional needs of humans in a subtle and unpretentious way. Thus, it can be an adjunct to counselling.

Ragas have been known for their emotional impact in humans for a very long time. Most of the ancient texts and manuscripts, depicting ragas as a medical intervention (e.g., Raga Chikitsa) are still untraceable and some of them are totally lost with the passage of time. However, some of the remnants of these texts are fortunately available to this day, thanks to the efforts made by the Tanjore Saraswati Mahal Library since independence. They all go to show that Indian musicology had placed adequate emphasis on the emotional role of ragas through trials and errors and had come out with a choice of tones (swaras) that affect the emotional needs of listeners.

It appears that these therapeutic concepts were well-developed and practised in India by the 12th or 13th century, but were lost thereafter. Improvising music to inculcate pleasant feelings have been dealt with in Sangita Sudha, a 17th Century work, authored by the Nayaka King Raghunatha Nayak and his minister Govinda Dikshitar.

The ancient Indian musicologists were not only concerned with the aesthetic role in experiencing raga, but had also emphasized their therapeutic impact on emotional situations. In this context the Sanskrit term bhava, which denotes the emotional bed that infuses life to the scale of a raga was regarded as the 'soul' of music. Thus, while laying down the aesthetic norms, the classical musicologists were researching on the ability to fill a raga-scale with bhava. In fact this has made Indian ragas an ideal tool for emotional healing which includes addressing the various conditions of mental imbalances such as anxiety, stress and trauma.

The Raga as a Therapy for Emotional Victims

Various ancient musicological texts on this aspect of music, as collected by then King Sahaji (1684-1711) were fortunately preserved in the Thanjavur Saraswathi Mahal Library in the form of several palm leaf manuscripts. After independence, these were studied by music scholars and published as a series of books by this library. From here we are able to understand how our ancient musicologists manipulated the raga structure to derive maximum benefits out of raga system.

Raga Alap or Improvisation

Expanding a raga structure is referred to as alap or raga alapana. This process of rendering involves a right combination of imagination aimed at a determined intention. To achieve a consistent bhava, the musicologists had in the past, worked on various 'catches' (pidi in Tamil), which inculcate pleasant feelings in listeners.

The pidis are the note-clusters, which form the building blocks for a raga. Thus, for example, let's take five pidis: Sa, Sa Ri, Sa RiGa, Sa RiGaMa, SaRiGa Ma Pa. These are the five pidis, which can be found within the body of a typical Indian raga. Based on years, decades and even centuries of experimentations with such clusters, keenly observing their impact on the minds of listeners, certain conclusions and generalization have been drawn which will benefit the music therapists in arriving at the 'appropriate' raga structures to address various mental ailments.

Based on the understanding that a pidi that satisfies the mind alone can be therapeutic, they devised ways and means to execute through imagination the right kind of pidis that could satisfy the listeners instantly.

Out of the five pidis, as illustrated above, it was observed that it is either Sa RiGa Ma or Sa RiGa Ma Pa which give maximum satisfaction to the listeners with a sense of completion. The remaining three pidis namely Sa SaRi and Sa Ri Ga are just capable of creating a sense of expectation in the minds of the listeners and never a sense of completion which alone renders satisfaction. In these "incomplete" examples, only suspense is created in the minds as there is no sense of completion. While listening to these pidis, the listeners are bound to feel certain inadequacy, and at the same time certain curiosity to reach a conclusion or completion.

Alap for Emotional Healing

Alap or improvisation of a raga is one of the many popular areas of classical music in India. Alap is regularly practised by both Carnatic as well as Hindustani musicians. As alap refers to the contemplative exposition of a raga with irregular phrase sans rhythm, it is highly intuitive and emotional in character. It helps the musician and his or her listener in channelizing and expressing the emotional horizons freely without bothering for the social etiquette or behavioural restraints in normal social living.

Alap, (also referred to by some as 'alapana') according to the musical traditions, can be divided into the following parts:

Akshiptika (Also, Aayatham): Aayatham is a Tamil word, which means 'preparation'. The Sanskrit word 'akshiptika' refers to 'throwing out in all directions'. Here, the emphasis is just to commence the musical experience with a selected raga piece, by pronouncing the swaras (notes) in an enjoyable way, so as to bring out the subtle emotion (raga bhava) from a centre-point. It involves a slow, smooth and leisurely way of extending the emotional nuances hidden behind these swaras, by exploring both elevation (aaroaha) and downfall (avaroha). It is like switching on an airplane by the cockpit crew before its take off. The detailed description of this stage has been described in Sangita Ratnakara, the oldest text available on music.

Raga Vardhani (also, Eduppu): Raga Vardhani refers to the take-off stage in raga experience. The Tamil word 'eduppu' here connotes the beginning of the expansion of the chosen raga. Having acquired a clear form by now, the musician is ready for a take-off. Raga Vardhani thus begins its voyage!

Makarini (Also Vartani): In this form of alap, all the saras show their heads. It refers to the top of expansion of the raga.

Muktayi (Also, Nyasa): All good things have to come to an end! It refers to the finale of the alap.

Conclusion:

Alap, the ancient form of contemplative music has many advantages as it exercises the brain and regulates the emotional flow in a pleasant manner. Though the negative emotions such as fear, anger, melancholy etc are expressed through ragas, they are expressed so pleasantly that they do not have any adverse effect on the listeners. On the other hand, it is this author's experience that such negative expressions, expressed so pleasantly through the ragas, help in addressing similar negative emotions suppressed by listeners. With powerful tones and tunes, sounds and beats, it is possible to address such emotional incrustations through catharsis

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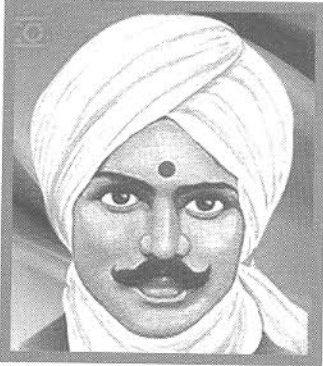
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Dr. T.V.Sairam is a former administrator and writes on alternative medicine including music therapy. He directs a distance learning course on music therapy.

**Virtuous 'Bharat Ratna' Non Pareil !
Mahakavi Subramanya Bharathi-
the fragrant flower of patriotism and music.**

'Garland' N. Rajagopalan

इन्डियनलैटरेचर : APR-JUN 2014



Mahakavi Subramanya Bharathi

The vast terrain of rain-fed, barren land presented like a charismatic pimple on a rugged face, a few clusters of trees amidst sympathetic bushes here and there seeking to invest and scatter good looks breaking the monotony of the desolate landscape. Rain God had been rather tooparsimonious to the vast belt except on occasions such as the one when Shri Muthuswami Dikshitar of the classical Carnatic music trinity and a Kshetrajna, felt weighed down by the depressing sight of drought and the attendant plight of the people, lured the Rain God to shed copious rains singing the historic song, *Anandamritakarshini* in endearing raga Amritavarshini. Won over by, nay surrendering to, the winsome appeal of his fragrant music, rains, copious rains indeed, descended conferring therapeutic joy to the hard-hit populace blest with the habit of gazing at the sky studded with rain-bearing clouds bypassing, deserting their belt! Even as jasmine carries its fragrance to parched areas too, this belt enjoys the merit of presenting remarkable stalwarts like Sage Shri Ramana Maharshifrom Tiruchuli and the invincible national poet and patriot, Mahakavi Subramanya Bharathi from Ettayapuram.

The birth of Bharathi on December 11, 1882 inscribed the name of the place indelibly and justifiably on the political and cultural maps of Bharat. The lustrous life of the poet was visibly clear when he was crowned 'Bharathi' - Poet Laureate - even at the tender age of ten when he should be playing 'chadugudu' on the harmless streets of Ettayapuram. He flowered like the lotus and the rose blended together, as a supreme poet of unexcelled grace and a freedom fighter rich with the aroma of a magnificent satyagrahi. His eloquent songs cover all aspects of life and the coverage is truly matchless and magnificent. He surrendered his all – BMI [body, mind and intellect] - to his motherland and knew nothing but service and sacrifice. His noble wife surrendered, on his demise, all the rights over the massive compositions of excellence of her husband to the nation. Bharathi died prematurely in the early hours of September 11, 1921 long before his cherished freedom-based Bharat became a virtuous, legal reality. He lived the life of a freedom fighter, full of gracious dedication, absolute devotion and winsome service not only to his motherland, but to the universe and the people world over. Most unfortunately, that acknowledged revolutionary was not adequately recognized as learned patriot-parliamentarian, S. Satyamurthi thundered in sorrow on the floor of the then legislature, "The late Bharathi, on whose tongue Goddess Saraswati danced the dance of patriotism, had he been born in any free country in the world, would have been made the Poet-Laureate with honours and titles and would have lived and died among the most honoured."

He lived the life of a supreme dedicated patriot non pareil; his vision embraced the entire universe; his output covered liberty, equality, fraternity, social justice and all. His songs are the much sought after food for eminent musicians, dancers, dramatists, films, and even for pseudo patriots. The songs are all at the highest pedestal, rich with verdant sahitya, alluring sangita, fragrant bhava-rasa fully soaked in selfless patriotism and pregnant with nobility, gallantry, solicitude, and much of the enviable. Where mind is ever free and refuses to be conquered, who can quell it? He could not erase the noble belief of independent Bharat! Conceiving himself as a citizen of Free Bharat decades before it became a reality, he chose to address, nay challenge, the Lord like the fond child addressing its doting mother: "For a millennium we stood deprived of our freedom! Now that we have it, would we risk losing it?" "Lord! Do you think that we nourished this crop of freedom with water? No, no!! We had nourished it with our sacred tears! Is it Thy Will that it should wither?" Non pareil! Unexcelled!! Truly Himalayan!!! Mount Everest smiled!!! That passionate outburst from

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A Tribute to my teacher, Dhondutai Kulkarni

Namita Devidayal



Namita Devidayal with her Guru Dhondutai Kulkarni regularly on the radio. She later learned from Laxmibai Jadhav, also from the same gharana.

Dhondutai Kulkarni, a Hindustani classical singer of the Jaipur-Atrauligharana, who died at 87 in Mumbai in June, closed the chapter on a world in which music was not about performance or fame, but was as unconditional as breathing.

Dhondutai was born in Kolhapur in 1927 to a school master who defied the strict social norms that dictated the lives of Brahmin girls and pushed his daughter to learn music from Bhurji Khan, the son of Alladiya Khan, then the court singer in Kolhapur. She became well regarded as a child artiste and performed

When the formidable Kesarbai Kerkar announced that she was finally willing to teach someone, she chose Dhondutai to be the lucky one who would inherit her rare ragas and inimitable style. Dhondutai's father sold his house in Kolhapur and moved to Mumbai so that she could learn from Kesarbai and pursue a career in music.

Dhondutai was known for being a purist and for her repository of rare ragas. She was especially fluent in the Jaipur gharana's compound ragas such as Lalita-Gauri, Basanti - Kedar, Bhoop-Nat and many others which, she said, had to be braided together so that you couldn't tell where one raga began and the other ended. She was awarded the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award in 1990.

Fiercely independent, Dhondutai insisted on staying alone in a flat in Borivli, in Mumbai, with only her gleaming tanpuras as companions. She continued to teach until the very end, for she was committed to ensuring that the gharana's legacy be passed on. When she taught, she offered much more than musical nuggets. Along with voice culture, her students were recipients of her nuggets of wisdom. "These days you all teach your children how to win, but you should also be teaching your children how to lose, else their training is incomplete". She was not blindly enamoured of modernity, saying, "the flickering flame of a diya will always give you more joy than a thousand powerful electrical lights". She lived for two things – music and spirituality and the two were inextricably linked.

There was an other-worldly quality about her. She believed in, and saw things, that most others did not see, introducing her students to a dimension of life that was invisible to most people, like blessings and moon dust, like those unseen notes that can never be written, which only a guru can teach her student, person to person. That is why, she firmly believed that the guru-shishya tradition can never really be replaced or modernized, or sentenced to the alleged efficiency of technology. She was very suspicious of the instant coffee fame that dictates the performance world today and never compromised her musical integrity in pursuit of worldly success. Fame, she believed, was more to do with luck than with an artiste's true worth.

I first went to her, some 35 years ago, and she gradually transformed a reluctant student into one completely mesmerised by the magic of Hindustani classical music. I remember how, many years later, someone asked me whether I knew the Jaipur-Atrauligharana's secret two-note taan. I immediately challenged Dhondutai. Why hadn't she taught this to me? Was I not worthy of the gharana's most priceless gems? She just laughed and said, "But it's one of the first things you learned. Think about it." She then left the music room to make tea, leaving me strumming the tanpura, baffled. I scrolled through the entire musical database in my head to try and retrieve the

two-note taan. Finally, she came back and said, "Come on, sing it!" I couldn't. Then she revealed it and I realized that I had been singing it all my life, but without the hubris of knowing that I was. Dhondutai is survived by a brother and his family in Delhi and a sister's family in Jabalpur. Her musical family was far larger and includes many devoted students, fans and people like the late Azizuddin Khan, grandson of Alladiya Khan, her close friend and teacher, whom she would call if she forgot the second verse of a composition. She never got married because she believed you could never have more than one master. Hers was music.

Courtesy: The Times of India

Namita Devidayal, a disciple of Smt. Dhondutai Kulkarni, is the author of 'The Music Room' and 'Aftertaste'. She is a journalist with The Times of India and lives in Mumbai.

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Smt. Jayalakshmi- a tribute

P. Vasanth Kumar



Smt. Jayalakshmi

The world of Carnatic music has recently become poorer with the passing away of Jayalakshmi of the Radha-Jayalakshmi duo of vocalists. Next to Brinda and Mukta, they occupied an exalted status as duo singers for over 5 decades. Radha and Jayalakshmi were cousin sisters and performed in all major sabhas across the country and abroad. Known for their adherence to the GNB bani, their recitals were vibrant and comprised compositions of many Vaggeyakaras and others.

Jayalakshmi was blessed with a voice with a unique timbre which could effortlessly traverse the 3 octaves upto the tharasthayi sadja. Radha had a contrasting husky voice which was no less attractive and together their voices blended very well. It used to be a thrilling experience to listen to them sing kritis like *Janani Ninnuvina* (Reetigowla) when the chittaswaram and sahityam for the same would be sung by Radha in the lower and by Jayalakshmi in the upper registers. Jayalakshmi's maintaining the tala was a visual treat.

Radha and Jayalakshmi were gracious ladies and steered away from controversies of any sort. They had the benefit of being accompanied by many top ranking violinists and percussionists. They were known for continuously enlarging their already vast repertoire till their last concerts. As top graded artistes of All India radio and Doordarshan, they gave innumerable recitals over the radio which included many Akashvani Sangeet Sammelan concerts. One of their outstanding commercial recordings is their rendering of the ghana raga pancharatnakritis of Tyagaraja. Each ratna was preceded by an apt sloka from the Valmiki Ramayana. Senior violinist Vidushi A. Kanyakumari had accompanied them in this recording.

Radha and Jayalakshmi had a wide fan following and the currently popular duo singers Priya sisters (Haripriya and Shanmukhapriya) have modelled their style faithfully following the Radha-Jayalakshmi pattern.

Radha's vidwat was at par with Jayalakshmi's and their mutual appreciation of each other's music on concert platforms was always noticeable. Trained by T.R. Balu, a senior disciple of G.N. Balasubramanian, Radha and Jayalakshmi frequently used to get direct advice from GNB himself, who used to address them as his granddaughters.

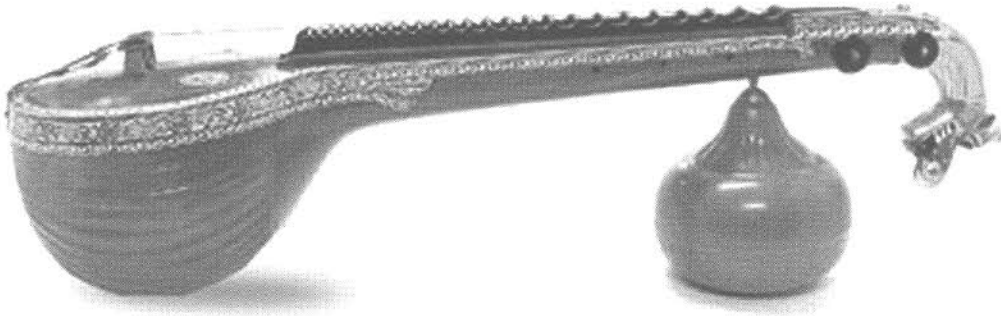
They were recipients of many awards which included the Kalaimamani award from the Tamilnadu Government and the TTK award from the Music Academy, Madras.

Radha and Jayalakshmi were staunch devotees of the Sai Baba of Puttaparthi and regularly gave recitals at Puttaparthi during the birthday celebrations of the Baba in the month of November. Jayalakshmi had lent her voice for many a film song. Unforgettable among these is the Hindolam raga song *Maname Muruganin Mayilvahanam* in the Tamil film Motor Sundaram Pillai.

P. Vasanth Kumar is a senior Veena Vidwan , writer and music critic based in Chennai.

Veena - The Instrument?

Priya Viswanathan



Saraswati Veena

I fondly held the Veena close to my heart;
Playing on her frets; continuing at a leisurely pace.
Abruptly, I stopped to gaze at her beauty,
Her utter charm; her sheer, luminous grace!

Gently placing her down from my lap,
Taking in the sight of her; oh, how my spirit sang!
Lightly running my fingers across her length,
Thrilling in her form; her resonant twang!

I wondered at the inimitable bond we shared;
A closeness that undoubtedly came from many lives past,
Inexorably bound; soul-mates, residing within one another;
I fervently hoped and prayed that it would forever last.

Travelling down an infinite memory lane, I thought
Of all the good and bad times we had shared,
We had, as one, witnessed both loss and gain;
Had acted in concert; like two units permanently paired!

She had broken herself so as to make me better,
Went dissonant to make me realize my own wrong.
How gently she had guided my every step;
Now chiding softly; now trying something strong!

I had always thought of her as my musical instrument.
But now; I wonder; was the truth very different?
Had I, instead, gone on to become her instrument?
Was I, in all this, but a miniscule little fragment?

Or were we essentially the same entity?
Two identical halves of one whole?
Pray, tell me, O resplendent Veena,
Are we truly two bodies and one soul?

A senior disciple of Smt. Mangalam Muthuswamy, Priya Viswanathan is a teacher/performer of the Saraswati Veena; also the founder of Kalaa Kaumudi, an institute dedicated to the service of the Arts.

Tukkada 6¹

Quiz on Sangeeta and Natya

1. Two musicians, who became well known later, were in gurukulavasam at the same time learning under Tiruvidaimarudur Sakharama Rao. Who were they?
2. Who was the vainika from whom M S learnt to play on the Veena?
3. Syama Sastri has ingeniously introduced the swaras in the arohana of Bhairavi in his swarajati in that raga. How?
4. Which is the only kriti in Tamil of Syama Sastri?
5. Dikshitar's kritis are in Sanskrit with the exception of one in Manipravalam (a mix of many languages). Name it.
6. Kuntalavarali, Kadanakuthukalam and Nalinakanti have one characteristic in common. What is it?
7. Syama Sastri composed "Himadri Suthe" in Sanskrit in Kalyani. At the request of his disciples he composed another kriti in Telugu with the same varnamettu (datu). Name the kriti.
8. Which is the longest tala in Carnatic music?
9. Maha Vaidyanatha Sivan composed the 72-melakarta ragamalikai. But before him another vaggeyakara had done it. Who was he?
10. To whom is the creation or discovery of Hamsadhwani attributed?
11. Who was the father of Hirabai Barodekar?
12. While singing a khyal he forgot the line in antara. Instead, on the spur of the moment, he sang his residential address! Who was he?
13. What is the difference in the concept of pitch (aadhara sruti) between Western and Indian classical music?
14. Which is world's oldest Sanskrit theatre?
15. Sopanam is the system of music in Kerala dances like Kathakali. Although the ragas are mostly the same as in Carnatic music there is a difference in their rendering. What is it?

¹The objective of the column is not only to test the knowledge of the readers but also to supplement it. They are welcome to send dissenting letters with supporting evidence, if they do not agree with the answers on Page 43. It is important for keeping the record straight.



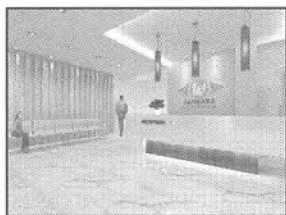
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Eye Care Beyond Compare

ReaderSpeak

I would like to bring to the attention of the editorial board an error in the answers to the Quiz on Sangeeta and Natya on page 27 of the issue -Vol. XLI, issue no.1, Jan - Mar 2014.

The ques. no.14's answer could have been contained in the first line of the answer, the extra information given is erroneous.

In the Prambanan Temple in Central Java there are only male figures in a single panel showing animation of the movement.

The male and female figures showing the different aspects of the movement are installed in the Uttara Chidambaram Temple Satara, designed by Dr. Padma Subrahmanyam at the behest of Paramacharya Shri Chandrashekharendra Saraswati Swamigal.

Dr. Jayashree Rajagopalan.

The Quiz Master replies:

In her rejoinder Smt Jayashree Rajagopal says, "In the Prambanan Temple in Central Java there are only male figures in a single panel showing animation of the movement." I thank her for reading the quiz and commenting. I would request her to refer to the doctoral dissertation of Alessandra Iyer published as "Prambanan: Sculpture and Dance in Ancient Java" to support my statement that the Prambanan sculptures have both male and female figures. In fact, a few years ago, in an interview to a Malayalam TV channel, Dr Padma Subrahmanyam, who had done extensive research in this area, recounted an episode in the designing of the karana sculptures in the Satara Nataraja temple. Paramacharya of Kanchi had asked her to design them in a way different from the ones seen till then. (Obviously he was referring to Thanjavur, Chidambaram and Kumbakonam temple sculptures where the dancers are either males or females.) When she showed the sketches to him, he had just one look at them and asked her whether she had been to Indonesia. She replied in the negative. She did not have the courage to ask him as to why he had asked the question. The mystery was solved later when she went to Prambanan and viewed the sculptures there that had both male and female figures, as in her sketches, apart from other comparable characteristics. The real mystery is how the holy man knew about the details of the Prambanan sculptures. He had never been to Indonesia or, for that matter, never travelled abroad! Incidentally I visited Prambanan during my karana study tour in India and abroad about a decade ago.

Clarification of the Karana Panels of Prambanan

Though I was absolutely sure of what I had pointed out regarding the Karana panels of Prambanan, Indonesia, as I have been with my Guru Dr. Padma Subrahmanyam from the time she started her research till date, and she has explained all her findings and shared her experiences with Mahaswami, I still thought duty bound to clarify the matter with her. She has re-clarified that there are only male figures in the karana panels at the Prambanan Temple. Only 53 panels could be clearly identified with the nrityakaranas but they are not even in their serial order. These are found in the balustrade of the temple where obviously all the 108 panels were originally placed, but during the renovation undertaken they have been placed to fit into the structure, interspersed with other panels described as 'apsaras'. It was Dr. Padma's original idea to use the male and female figures in the karana panels of Satara temple to show the animation of the movement which Mahaswami had approved of. Dr. Alessandra Iyer, an Italian Archaeologist came from the British Academy, to study under Dr. Padma Subrahmanyam for her Post Doctoral Research on Natyasastra in Indonesia. Both of them went to the Siva Temple at Prambanan for the study. The outcome of this was Dr. Alessandra's book titled "Prambanan: Sculpture and Dance in Ancient Java", clearly elucidating the finds, with photographs showing three male figures. Dr. Jayashree Rajagopalan

Sabha Roundup

Report

Unveiling of Dr. K.S.Varadhachary's Bust 12th April 2014

Jyothi Mohan



(l to r) Shri. S.S. Rajan, Shri. A. Krishnakumar, Smt. Jamna Varadachary, Dr. V. Rangaraj, Dr. V.Shankar

A physician with a magical healing touch, passionate about the fine arts, deeply religious and a friend of the poorer sections of society, Dr.K.S.Varadhachary was all that and more. When he suddenly left us all, on 31st October 2008 the Sabha lost a very dear friend, philosopher and guide. To perpetuate his memory, especially for the services he rendered to the Shanmukhananda Medical Centre, his bust was unveiled on his

birthday, by Shri A.Krishnakumar, Managing Director, State Bank of India on 12th April 2014 at the Sri Shanmukhananda Chandrasekarendra Saraswathi Auditorium. Dr.V.Rangaraj, Vice President of the Sabha welcomed the gathering. Following the Vedic invocation by students of the Veda Pathashala, *Shri Venkata Girisham* was rendered with feeling by Gayathry and Meenakshi, students of the Vidyalyaya.



Unveiling of Bust of Dr. K.S. Varadhachary

On this occasion, the oldest patient to be operated upon at the Nerolac Eye Centre, 108-year old, Latifa Bibi was felicitated by the chief guest. The unveiling of the bust was done by Shri A Krishnakumar, who incidentally, is related to Dr.Varadhachary. All the committee members on the dais offered flowers as a mark of respect to the noble soul. Following this was the screening of a short documentary film of 12- minute duration on the Dialysis Centre by Niranjana of Creative Consultants.

Dr.V.Shankar, President of Sri Shanmukhananda Fine Arts and Sangeetha Sabha addressed the gathering. Dr.Varadhachary was a physician who merged his identity with that of his patient. A very affable doctor, he was venerated by his patients. His interests went beyond health care. He was deeply interested in the fine arts and in 1989 he became a committee member of the Managing Council and Trustee of the Sabha. He was interested in religion as well and was the President of Sri Vedhantha Desika Sampradaya Sabha, Matunga for a very long time. He was convinced that good health is integral to appreciate fine music. Thus, in 1974,

Shanmukhananda's Medical unit came into existence. Dr. V. Subramaniam, President of the Sabha for 22 years, set up the Dialysis Centre when the Sabha celebrated its fortieth year. The Dialysis Centre is a gift of the Sabha to community health care, especially catering to the lower and vulnerable sections of society. Under his stewardship, the health centre flowered. The bust will be moved to the Medical Centre and will be a source of inspiration to the staff and patients.

Shri A.Krishnakumar was felicitated with a shawl and a Tanjore painting. Shri Vaibhav RamachandraTavi who sculpted the bust was also felicitated. Smt. Jamna Varadhachary was presented with another bust of Dr. Varadhachary. SBI donated Rs. One crore and thirty four lakhs to the Medical Centre to strengthen the Eye care Centre with state of art equipment. Shri Krishnakumar paid glowing tributes to Dr. Varadhachary. He had a great sense of humour and enjoyed reading P.G. Wodehouse. It is indeed laudable that SBI, a leading commercial bank has concerned itself with education and healthcare. Replying to the tributes paid to her late husband on the occasion, Smt. Jamna Varadhachary said she was touched that people remembered him and his contribution to society. She added that the Shanmukhananda family has always been there for her whenever she has needed their support. She said that the first dialysis machine was donated by SBI. She said Dr. Varadhachary would have been very pleased with the progress of the Medical Centre. Shri R. Narayanan, Vice President and Convenor of the Medical Centre, proposed a vote of thanks. Medical Retina care Centre will be set up with the money received. Shri Swaminathan mooted the idea of making a film on the Eye Care Centre.

Dr. Varadhachary firmly believed that laughter is the best medicine. Every year, he regaled the gathering at the Shanmukhananda's Members' Day programme with jokes, musical quiz with a generous dose of humour and so on. He always had the audience in splits, asking for more! Hence it was but fitting to end this formal function with Sanjay Keni's stand-up comedy, "Ek Haseen Sham."

Violin Duet of Shri S.R. Mahadeva Sarma and Smt. Rajasree Sarma 13th April 2014

Vasumathi Arvind



(l to r) Kottayam G. Santhosh Kumar (Mridangam), S.R. MahadevaSarma and RajasreeSarma (Violin), S. RamachandraPotti (Ghatam)

The brother-sister duo, Shri S.R. Mahadeva Sarma and Smt. Rajasree Sarma gave a brisk start to their brilliant violin recital with the fast paced *Ganarajena* by Muthuswami Dikshitar in Arabhi raga. A short alapana of Sarasangi was played as a preface to the Swati Tirunal kriti *Jaya Jaya Padmanabha*. There was an interesting exchange of kalpanaswaras for the pallavi with long winding korvais. A good alapana of Sriranjani was played by Rajasree before the next Thyagaraja kriti, *Sogasuga Mridanga Talamu* with elaborate kalpanaswaras for the pallavi. Patnam Subramanya Iyer's *Raghuvamsasudha* in Kathanakuthuhalam was the filler before the siblings broke into a detailed alapana of Kambhoji played alternately by them. The composition was

Harikesanallur Muthiah Bhagavathar's *Ratnakanchukadharini* which was embellished with good niraval and kalpanaswaras, displaying their virtuosity.

Sadashiva Brahmendra's *Manasa Sancharare* in Sama was the next composition to be played. It was now time for the main item of the evening-the RTP. The Pallavi, *Velane Vadivelane Sivabalane Kanda Sharanam, Swamimalai Vaanarulum* was in Kalyani raga and set to Mishrajati Triputa talam. The alapana was divided between the brother and sister, with Rajasree taking over from 'n'. She also performed grahabhedam and forayed into Mohanam. The siblings were ably supported by Kottayam Shri G. Santhosh Kumar on the Mridangam and Shri S. Ramachandra Potti on the ghatam for the tanam. While Mahadeva Sarma sang the pallavi in trikalam, Rajasree played all three kalams on the violin. After the niraval, ragamalika swaras were played in the ragas Sahana, Rukmaambari, Kapi, Desh and Sindhubhairavi, ending with Kalyani. The Tani avartanam was very well-played. The post-tani segment comprised two Swati Tirunal compositions- an Utsava Prabandham composition *Neelapoonkuzhalale* in Yadukula Kambhoji and the classic *Aaj Aaye Shyam Mohan* in Mishra Pahadi. The duo concluded their recital with the mangalam *Bhujagashaayino* composed by Maharaja Swati Tirunal in the raga Yadukulakambhoji. Truly it was a blissful evening with the siblings captivating the audience with their distinctive style of playing the violin.

Vocal concert of Shertalai Dr. K.N. Ranganatha Sharma 19th April 2014

Vasumathi Arvind



(l to r) Sridhar Parthasarathy (Mridangam),
Shertalai Dr. K.N. Ranganatha Sharma (Vocal), Shivakumar Anantharaman (Violin)

Shertalai Dr. K.N.Ranganatha Sharma, in his rich and resonant voice commenced his recital with an excellent rendition of Lalgudi Shri G.Jayaraman's varnam, *Ento Prematonu* in Bahudari and Muthuswami Dikshitar's *Vallabhanayakasya* in Begada embellished with some crisp kalpanaswaras. The raga Vakulabharanam was elaborated very well in which he sang *E Ramuni Nammitino* by Thyagaraja with very clear sahitya enunciation. After Thyagaraja's *Cheravademira* in Ritigowla, he rendered a brief but bhava laden alapana of Devagandhari followed by Muthuswami Dikshitar's kriti *Kshitija ramanam*. Thyagaraja's fast paced *Pattividuvarado* in Manjari was followed by a leisurely and evocative alapana of Ranjani and the rendition of a rare kriti *Mayamma Shubhamimma* composed by Shri M.D.Ramanathan. This rendition stood out on account of its intricate chittaswaram, pleasing niraval at "panchabhootatmaka" and swaraprasthara with interesting patterns. The highlight of the performance was the brilliant alapana of Bhairavi followed by Muthuswamy Dikshitar's *Balagopala*. The image of Lord Krishna danced before one's eyes when the niraval at "Neela Neerada Shareera" was being sung. Such was the effect of the voice modulation and sahitya enunciation which was as clear as a mountain stream! Kalpanaswaras with good patterns and

kuraippu with special emphasis on 'nishadam' bringing out the essence of Bhairavi were rendered. Response on the violin by Shivakumar Anantharaman was very good. Sridhar Parthasarathy's 'tani' was excellent. A viruttam *Vizhikkutunai* sung as a ragamalika in the ragas Bilahari, Bhageshree and the melakarta raga Sucharitra preceded Koteeswara Iyer's *Velum Mayilum* also in Sucharitra. Shertalai Dr. K.N. Ranganatha Sharma concluded his recital with a Meera Bhajan, *Hari gun gaavat* and a tillana by Lalgudi Shri G. Jayaraman in Rageshree.

Felicitation of Chief Election Commissioners 31st May 2014



(l to r) Dr. V.Rangaraj, Dr.V.Shankar, Shri.S.Y.Qureshi, Shri. T.S.Krishnamurthy, Hon'ble Governor of Maharashtra Shri .K.Sankaranarayanan, Shri.M.S.Gill, Shri. Navin B. Chawla, Shri.J.M.Lyngdoh

On Saturday, 31st of May 2014, five Chief Election Commissioners of India were felicitated by our Sabha for successfully conducting the elections to 15 Lok Sabhas since Independence. The invitation was extended to 11 of the CECs but only five of them could make it for the function. They are Dr.M.S.Gill, Shri.J.M.Lyngdoh, Shri.Navin B.Chawla, Shri.S.Y.Qureshi and Shri. T.S.Krishnamurthy. The felicitation was done by SIES and our Sabha together. Dr. M.S.Gill and Shri.J. M.Lyngdoh spoke about their experiences as CECs and shared anecdotes with the audience. Shri T.N.Seshan and Shri.N.Gopalaswami had earlier expressed their inability to attend the function. They were felicitated at their respective homes and their statements recorded and shown on the video screen for the audience.



(l to r) Subalakshmi Iyer, Akshataa Seshan, Ramnath, Pavithra, Aparna, Krittika, Christina and Santhosh Rajan

A small English skit *Long live India* based on the elections, governance, and our constitution written and directed by Smt. Santhosh Rajan was presented on the stage by Krittika, Pavithra, Akshataa, Ramnath, Aparna, Christina and Subalakshmi Iyer.

Vocal Concert of Gayathri Girish 14th June 2014

Nalini Dinesh



(l to r) Poongulam Subramanyam (Mridangam), K.V. Gopalakrishnan (Kanjira), Gayathri Girish (Vocal), V. Srikant (Violin)

Gayathri began her concert with Bhairavi Ata tala varnam. With a voice that was taking time to settle in, Thyagaraja's *Marubalka* in Shriranjani raga seemed to be a brave choice for second kriti, most part of the kriti being in the higher octave. With that behind her, she launched into a pleasant alapana of a raga which one couldn't quite place. Gayathri announced the raga as Kuntalam, janya of Kantamani. Prof. Sambamurthy in his book *South Indian Music (Book 3)* lists the raga Kuntala as the equivalent of Kantamani in the Asampoorna Mela Paddhati. The kriti rendered in this raga was Dikshitar's *Shree Sugandhi Kuntalambike* on the consort of Shree Matrubhooteshwara of Tiruchi. The kriti rendition was embellished with kalpanaswaras at the madhyamakala passage "Vasudeva shree guruguha". Papanasam Sivan's Sahana kriti *Chittam Iragaadadenayya* and a fast-paced *Shreeekanta neeyeda* (Thyagaraja kriti in Bhavapriya) with single avartana kalpanaswaras followed. A detailed Kambhoji alapana with a deceptively Shankarabharanam-like opening phrase was followed by Thyagaraja's *O Rangashayee* with neraval and kalpanaswaras at "Bhooloka Vaikunthamidi". There was some inconsistency in the neraval in that Gayathri sometimes used the second line "Neelonaneeveyuppongi..." along with the first line "Bhooloka Vaikunthamidi...", and sometimes skipped the second line. Tani avartanam followed.

Vocal Concert of Dr. Baby Sreeram 15th June 2014

Nalini Dinesh

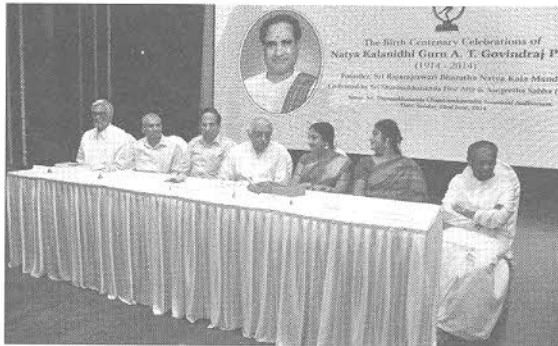


(l to r) Sridhar Parthasarathy (Mridangam), R.C. Sekhar (Ghatam), Dr. Baby Sreeram (Vocal), Palghat R. Swaminathan (Violin)

The Natakuranji pada varnam *Chalamela* was the opening item for a concert whose quality was enhanced several times over by the vocalist's fecund imagination but brought down a few notches by herself because of one too many slips. *Tulasidala mulache* had extensive neraval and interesting patterns of kalpanaswaras at "Saraseeruha punnaaga". An evocative Reetigowla alapana preceded Neelakanta Sivan's *Oraaru mugane* with kalpanaswaras at "Neengaadenadullam" with eduppu at different swaras. *Neevaada negaana* was followed by an elaborate Todi alapana with intricate brikas. The surprise choice of kriti was the dhyaana kriti of Dikshitar's Kamalaamba navaavaranam, *Kamalaambike*, with kalpanaswaras at pallavi. A very interesting Valaji composition *Ennidam irangidalaagaado*, composed by Baby herself with chittaswara composed by her husband Palghat Sreeram followed. The sahitya was set to the tala in a very unique manner as was the chittaswara. An excellent and explorative Poorvikalyani alapana followed. The kriti was *Meenakshi memudam dehi* with neraval at "Meenalochani pasha mochani". The placement of the syllables of the sahitya kept varying throughout the neraval. Janaranjani alapana and Shyama Shastri's *Nannu brova raada amba* with kalpanaswaras at "Shyamakrishnasodari" was followed by Hindolam RTP. The pallavi sahitya was "Maanida gunam illaadavar manidanaa maname ninaindu". Kalpanaswaras were sung in Varaali, Kambhoji and Ranjani. Swati Tirunal's *Saramaina* in Behag followed RTP.

Birth Centenary Celebration of Kalaimamani Guru A.T. Govindraj Pillai 22nd June 2014

Jyothi Mohan



(l to r) Shri. V. Ramnarayan , Shri. P.K. Bisoi, Dr. V Shankar, Dr.R.Chidambaram, Dr Padma Subramanyam., Smt. Chitra Visweswaran, Guru Kalyanasundaram

Sri Rajarajeswari Bharatha Natya Kala Mandir and Sri Shanmukhananda Fine Arts and Sangeetha Sabha jointly celebrated the birth centenary of Kalaimamani Guru A.T. Govindraj Pillai on 22nd June 2014 at the Sri Shanmukhananda Chandrasekarendra Saraswathi Auditorium. The foyer of the hall took on a festive air as several young girls in traditional attire and jewellery greeted guests who came in with a cheery smile and a namaskaram.

The *Mangalalsai* by Vidwan Shri Shaktivel and party filled the auditorium as the invitees took their seats. A mellifluous prayer sung by Smt.Vidya Harikrishna set the tone for the grand celebrations. A short film, "The Life and Achievements of Guru Govindraj Pillai", was screened. The film put together by late Sri Krishna Mohan, former chief producer, Films Division along with Shri Mahesh Sinha, Smt. Pushpa Krishnamohan and Smt.Kavita Balaraman took us back in time to the origin of this premier institute of Bharatanatyam. It brought back vivid memories as we heard Guruji talk, sing and teach the first students of this famous dance school.

Guru A.T. Govindraj Pillai was born on 22nd June 1914, into a family practising music and dance for generations. He was an accomplished musician and from Vidwan Kuppiyah Pillai, he learnt the technique and nuances of Bharatanatyam. He married Smt.Karunambal, the only daughter of

Vidwan Kuppiyah Pillai, who proved to be a great source of inspiration to him. With his mentor's blessings, Guruji and Smt. Karunambal took the giant step of leaving Tamil Nadu and making Mumbai their new home at the behest of Vidwan G.V. Ramani. With the sole intention of popularizing dance and music, they set up a class in Chetna Art Gallery in South Bombay in 1945. Very soon, several students joined them and they moved to the present premises in Matunga. Thus, the Rajarajeswari Bharata Natya Kala Mandir was established in 1951 fulfilling the long-felt need for a traditional dance institution teaching the pristine and beautiful Thanjavurbani. Smt. Karunambal reminisced that most students knew no Tamil and they themselves knew no other language. Yet, they managed with gestures and a few phrases and were greatly loved and respected as they treated their shishyas like family. Several leading lights of cinema and great Kathak dancers came to learn Bharatanatyam from them. Soon Guru Mahalingam Pillai and Guru Kalyanasundaram joined them and later even Vidwan Kuppiyah Pillai moved to Bombay. Guru Govindraj Pillai was an accomplished musician and sang as well as did nattuvangam in performances. The film showed all the Gurus conducting programmes and we saw a very young Guru Kalyanasundaram playing the mridangam for these programmes. The family tradition has been kept alive and continues to grow under the leadership of Guru Kalyanasundaram, with all children and grandchildren of the Gurus teaching and propagating this distinctive Thanjavurbani of Guru Bharata Vidwan Kuppiyah Pillai.

In recognition of his meritorious service to dance and music for nearly four decades, Guru Govindraj Pillai was honoured by the Tamil Nadu Government with the prestigious title of 'Kalaimamani' and the award of the best Bharata Natya Vidwan of 1971. He had presented innumerable arangetrams and performances, both in India and abroad. His students received wide acclaim for performances in Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Nepal, and Australia, to name a few. Dr. R. Chidambaram, Principal Scientific Advisor to the Govt. of India, spoke very warmly about Guru Govindraj Pillai and the illustrious family which has held aloft traditional values in this city. Shri P.K. Bisoi, Chief Post Master General, released a first day cover with a special cancellation to commemorate the occasion. He said he was also very pleased with the philatelic collection at Shanmukhananda Sabha. Dr. Padma Subrahmanyam paid rich tributes to the Gurus of the institution. She spoke about the yeomen service rendered and sacrifices made by these Gurus who had relocated so far from their homes to enrich Mumbai with their dance tradition. She recollected that she learnt the Ganesha Kavuthvam from Guru Mahalingam Pillai which was later performed by 1000 dancers in Rajarajewaram on the temple completing 1000 years of its existence. Smt. Chitra Visweswaran said she had learnt for ten years from T.A. Rajalakshmi, one of the foremost devadasis of Tiruvudaimarudur and Marudappa Pillai, younger son of Vidwan Kuppiyah Pillai who had moved to Kolkata to teach dance, on being requested by the Tagore family. She remembered how her Guru's family came before every performance of hers in Mumbai to bless her and met her afterwards freely offering constructive tips on the performance, which stood her in good stead. Such was their generosity and love for all artistes she remarked. Mr. V Ramnarayan, Editor-in-chief of 'Sruti' magazine, was overwhelmed by the hospitality shown by the Gurus' family in true Thanjavur spirit, he said. He was impressed at the way the Gurus came to Mumbai, established themselves as one of the finest institutions in the country for Bharatanatyam and how well the shishyas bonded with them as one large family. He was also impressed by the camaraderie of the various sabhas in Mumbai which came together to felicitate artistes during such celebrations.

Dr. V. Shankar, President of the Sabha, spoke highly of Guru Govindraj Pillai's efforts in establishing an institution of great repute, of how he had upheld the lofty traditions he had imbibed and had given it generously without commercializing it. He encouraged his students to go out and set up their own institutions so that the great art could go even further. The fact that he is remembered and venerated even thirty years after his demise speaks volumes of the love and respect he commanded among his students and admirers, he said. Guru Govindraj Pillai's wife, Guru Smt. Karunambal was felicitated by the special guests. Guru Kalyanasundaram thanked the guests, the Sri Shanmukhananada Fine Arts and Sangeetha Sabha and all those who had spared no efforts in organising the celebrations. *Nrityarpanam by 100 students of the Rajarajeswari*



Bharata Natya Kala Mandir

A Nriyarpnam was offered on the occasion by a hundred students of the Rajarajeswari Bharata Natya Kala Mandir. A group presentation of Ganesa Stuti, Alarippu and Todivarnam were performed to an original audio recording of Guru Govindraj Pillai. The granddaughters of the Gurus danced along with the students. An excerpt from the famous dance drama 'Vasanthavalli', was performed by Vani and Meera, the famous dancing duo of the Kala Mandir, to live music, led by Guru Kalyanasundaram. The performance ended with Guruji's favourite Atana Tillana performed by the senior students of the institution. Clean lines, grace, subtle abhinaya and faultless footwork were evident through the presentation in line with the high standards set by the Gurus of the institution.

A sumptuous, well-organised lunch brought the curtain down on a meticulously-planned birth centenary celebration of Guru Govindraj Pillai.

OBITUARY



Dr. Prapancham Sitaram

Carnatic flautist par excellence, academician and administrator Dr. Prapancham Sitaram breathed his last on 1st June 2014. He was a disciple of the genius T.R.Mahalingam. He had served as Station Director, Chief producer and Director of programmes in the IBS (Indian Broadcasting Service) cadre, All India Radio. He was also associated with the UGC as an expert member. He received the Kalaimamani award in 1983. Since he firmly believed that learning vocal music was a must for all instrumentalists in order to absorb the meaning of the lyrics, he learnt vocal music from Mangalampalli

Balamuralikrishna, Sandhyavandanam Srinivasa Rao and violinist Annavarappu Ramaswamy. His demise has indeed left a void in the world of Indian instrumental music.

Answers to Quiz on Sangeeta and Natya

1. Semmangudi Srinivasier and Devakottai Narayana Iyengar
2. K S Narayanaswamy
3. Each charanam starts with one swara in the arohanam.
4. "Tarunam Edamma" in Gowlipantu. While this is accepted generally there are some scholars who attribute some more kritis in Tamil to him.
5. "Venkatachalapate" in Kapi.
6. The swaras have no gamakas.
7. "Birana Varalichi"
8. Simhanandana tala (the longest of the 108 talas), consisting of 128 aksharas or units
9. Lavani Venkata Rao, a court poet in the Tanjavur kingdom, composed a version of the 72 mela ragamalikai in Marathi in praise of the son-in-law of the king incorporating the raga mudras. Maha Vaidyanatha Iyer was requested to set it to music, which he accomplished in seven days. However, he did not like the erotic nature of the theme and the *nara stuti* (singing the praise of a human being) in the composition. Therefore he wrote an alternative sahitya in praise of Lord Pranatharthihara (Siva) of the temple at Tiruvarur. This is the version currently in vogue as the 72-mela ragamalika.
10. Ramaswami Dikshitar, the father of Muthuswami Dikshitar
11. Ustad Abdul Karim Khan, the founder of the Kirana Gharana. Hirabai's mother was a Hindu.
12. Bhimsen Joshi
13. The pitch is standardized in Western music. It has 440 vibrations per second. It was accepted by most of the Western nations at an international conference in 1939. In the Indian system each musician chooses his own pitch according to convenience.
14. Kudiyattam
15. There are no gamakas.

Scores (one mark for each correct answer)

Less than 6: Hope is eternal! Start on sarali varisai.

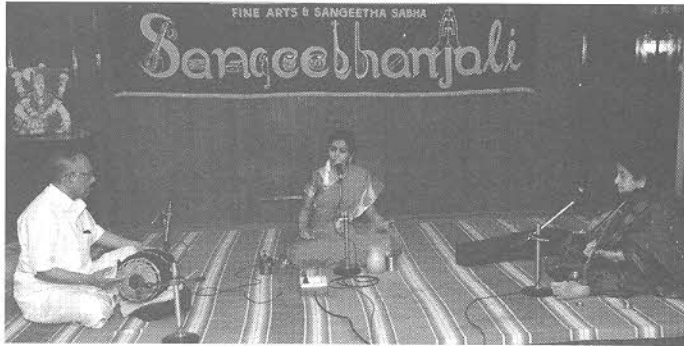
6-10: Good progress! Fit to learn varnam.

11-15: Congratulations! Proceed to Ragam, Tanam and Pallavi.

Happenings at the Vidyalyaya

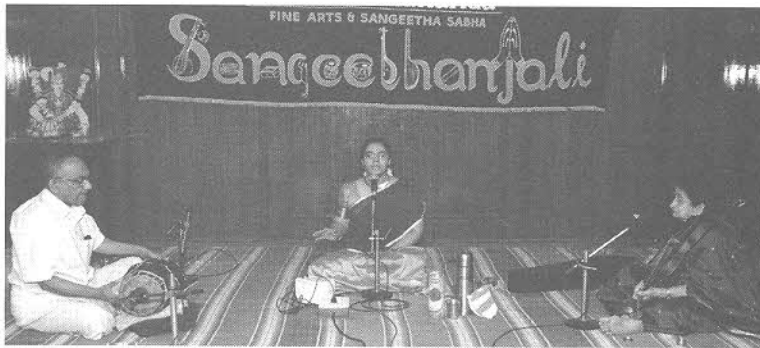
Vasumathi Arvind

Maharaja Swati Tirunal Day 26th April 2014



(l to r) N.S.Kalyanaraman (Mridangam), Poornima Muralidharan (Vocal),
Parvathy Shankar (Violin)

The opening piece of Poornima Muralidharan's vocal recital was a brisk *Paahi Shripathe* in the raga Hamsadhvani which was rendered well. What followed was *Deva Deva Kalayamithe* in Mayamalavagowla in which Poornima brought out the raga bhavam well. A brief alapana of Bilahari preceded *Smara Sada Manasa*. The Charukesi kriti, *Kripaya Paalaya Shoure* was a good, bhava laden rendition. The alapana of Simhendra Madhyamam and the kriti *Rama Rama Guna Seema* were enjoyable. The recital concluded with *Bhogeendra Shayinam* in Kuntalavarali



(l to r) N.S.Kalyanaraman (Mridangam) , M.V.S. Nisha (Vocal) , Parvathy Shankar (Violin)

M.V.S. Nisha enthralled the audience with her well-modulated and pleasant voice. She commenced her recital with *Parvathi Nayaka* in Bhowli. Alapana of Ritigowla and kriti *Paripaalayamam* were rendered well wherein the raga sancharas were brought out clearly. *Pankajalochana* in Kalyani was bhava laden with very good sahitya enunciation. *Saramaina Matalendo* in Behag, a beautifully rendered bhajan *Vishvesvara Darshan* in Sindhubhairavi and the popular Dhanashri tillana *Geetadhuniku* brought Nisha's enjoyable recital to a close.

The artistes were accompanied by Parvathy Shankar on the violin and N.S.Kalyanaraman on the mridangam. Bhanumathi Sharma was the compere for the evening.

SRI SHANMUKHANANDA KANCHI MAHASWAMI SANGEETHA SANGRAHAALAY SUMMARY OF ARCHIVES

Summary of Audios

	Carnatic	Hindustani	Total
Concerts	11,969	1,632	13,601
Duration	26,814 hours	3,450 hours	30,264 hours
Tracks	99,244	10,288	1,09,532
Size	1,511.2 GB	194.2 GB	1,705.4 GB
Classifications	345	323	668
Main Artistes Covered	1,045 Artistes	335 Artistes	1,380 Artistes
Accompanists Covered	1,182 Artistes	116 Artistes	1,298 Artistes
Venues / Sabhas Covered	356	41	397
Cities Covered	189	43	232
Years Covered	1928 to 2010	1935 to 2009	1928 to 2010
Tracks Format	Mp3 44.1 Khz. 128 kbps Stereo 16 bit		
Tag	Id3 Tag Version 1.1 and Version 2.2		

Summary of Videos

Classification	Videos	Tracks	Size
Carnatic	1,328	2,439	829.3G
Hindustani	241	394	124.7G
Devotional	1,334	1,677	433.3G
Dance	209	397	118.8G
All	3,112	4,907	15063.G

Total Size of Archives

Carnatic Archives (Audio)	1,511.2 GB *
Hindustani Archives (Audio)	194.2 GB *
Videos - All	1,506.3 GB *
Total	3,211.7 GB *



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